Difficult Transitions

For the first time since we launched our newsletter, I write to you with sad news. This winter we learned that the UC Office of the President (UCOP) would not provide any additional funding for CCREC beyond its founding $1.54M grant, which was awarded five years ago. This loss has significantly reduced, and even ended, a number of our activities and projects. In what follows, I will outline the damage, and share the work that continues despite our weakened condition.

The most serious and immediate impact of UCOP’s decision has been the loss of our core operational staff, including Assistant Director Samara Foster, who left in April, and our Administration and Communications Coordinator, Delphine Foo-Matkin, who will be reduced to only one day/week at the end of this month. These devastating staff reductions have forced us into a very difficult transition period.

Sam (as she likes to be known) has been our Center’s only full-time employee, and her caring, tireless, and creative work formed CCREC’s heart and soul. Sam has been my main partner in building the day-to-day life of CCREC; I, and many others, have deeply grieved her departure. We wish her well and are happy that she could step into a Postdoctoral Scholar position in a Citizen Science project in collaboration with CCREC Fellow and Governance Council member Heidi Ballard, at UC Davis, but CCREC will never again be the same.

We have been compelled to cancel our Training Institute planned for this summer, and we have had to discontinue all of our grants. We have lost our ability to seed and develop new research projects, to support travel for graduate students and faculty to present their collaborative research at academic conferences, and to sponsor campus events that build capacity and community among UC engaged scholars. We are proud of the leading edge, best practices work accomplished by CCREC-supported scholars and their community partners, and our website will continue to enable people from around the world to learn of it, but no longer will CCREC grants be a generative force to develop the field.

As you will read in this newsletter, the two regional scale Signature Projects that we have incubated – the Young Adult Civic Engagement project, and the Growing Equity from the Ground Up project – continue to move forward. Each project has a strongly committed core of community partners and UC researchers who are determined to bring those projects into full form.

Our community partners were deeply angered by UCOP’s decision, and noted with dismay that the UC system annually supports literally hundreds of millions of dollars of military and corporate driven research programs, while at the same time it withdraws the small fraction of support it provides for research driven by the needs and interests of the most aggrieved communities that bear the brunt of the nation’s inequities in the economy, employment, education, environment, food systems, public health and housing. These priorities create even sharper divides that UC engaged scholars must overcome to make research matter in the public sphere so that our society might become more just and democratic.

CCREC has always been committed to the ethical practice of collaborative research, and holds itself accountable to the most
Message from the Director

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disadvantaged communities and not only the community of scholars and the university administration. We thus demanded that the university provide bridge funding so we could responsibly meet our obligations to our community partners and our other funders (the Spencer Foundation, National Science Foundation, and more than two dozen individual donors). UCOP refused our demand, but after some difficult negotiations, the UC Santa Cruz Vice Chancellor for Research and the Deans of the Graduate Division and the Social Sciences Division stepped forward to collectively provide about $35,000 for the next academic year. We will use this small contribution to stretch the funds remaining from our founding grant, and thus be able to transition our Signature Projects, complete our research on our seed grant projects (which will be the largest study of its kind and make a major contribution to the research literature), and host the last of our national conferences (Unsettling Research Ethics).

We have been grievously wounded by UCOP’s decision, but we are not dead and the bleeding has been staunched. We live on to struggle toward a more ethical and engaged university, toward a more truth and research based public sphere, and toward a more equitable society. Our work continues; even with our diminished capacity, we remain busy and productive, as you will read in this newsletter. A strongly dedicated group of graduate students and a bare bones research and support staff assist me and keep me energized. I remain as determined as ever to help CCREC achieve its founding vision. While it is a fact that CCREC will go out of business at the end of June in one year if we cannot find replacement funding for our core operations, it is also a fact that the spirit and impact of our work will live on beyond the existence of the Center.

Ron Glass
Ron Glass, Ph.D.,
CCREC Director/PI
Professor of Philosophy of Education
University of California at Santa Cruz

Farewell from Samara Foster, CCREC’s Assistant Director

It is with both sadness and hope that I write this farewell to CCREC. I am sad to be moving on before our work is completed, but I am filled with hope that our projects will carry on independently because of the committed individuals involved in them.

When I joined CCREC in the summer of 2010 as the first and only full-time staff person, I was excited to help build a UC-wide initiative to support equity-oriented collaborative community-based research to solve California’s most pressing problems. I deeply believe in this approach to research; it’s what research should be and do. Looking back, I’m in awe of what we have accomplished in such a short period of time and with such a small (but talented and dedicated) team.

I initially was charged with creating an infrastructure and operational systems to implement the ambitious goals set out in the original proposal that led to CCREC’s founding, but before that first year was over we already had programs underway. We began to offer grants to seed innovative projects, host campus events, and support UC faculty and graduate students who were presenting their collaborative research at academic conferences. We started the painstaking work of incubating two large-scale regional projects that could enable distinctive longitudinal studies of collaborative research that could inform best practices.

We took the lead nationally to examine the unique ethical issues that arise when research is conducted with community members as full partners. We supported new scholars in the field through a summer training institute.

We hosted a powerful dialogical conference on digital media, community-university collaborations, and democracy that left people asking for more. We communicated with a wide audience about engaged scholarship through our newsletters, research reports, policy briefs, website, project brochures, and scholarly publications. These few highlights only hint at our activities; I could go on and on. Overall, we provided a resource and a support community for engaged scholars who are often isolated. I am very proud of what we set in motion and of the community of scholars and activists that we brought together through our work.

UCOP’s decision to defund CCREC is at odds with the state of collaborative research as a field. This approach is being embraced more and more by universities across the nation and the world; expanded efforts are even underway at the UCs in Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Riverside, and Santa Cruz. I’m excited by these initiatives, and I know they will make a difference for both scholars and our communities. Sadly, CCREC could have continued to serve as a hub and resource for all of these efforts; hopefully, the networks and communities established through CCREC remain vibrant.

Personally, I have learned so much from, and been extremely inspired by, the amazing people—community leaders, activists, scholars, students, and university staff—that I have had the privilege of working with through CCREC. I will always carry this with me, with deep thanks. I am also incredibly thankful to have worked with Ron Glass for the past five years and for the many opportunities for personal and professional growth that he provided in assigning me a leading role with CCREC.

Lastly, I feel so lucky to have spent a great deal of my time working with our team of graduate student and postdoctoral researchers, and with our undergraduates. We accomplished so much together and created friendships that I will cherish for life. CCREC was more than a place to go to work for me—it was a family, a place to grow and learn, and a community where people worked together to make research matter. I remain committed to our vision of a better and more ethical public university that serves all of its communities.

Sam Foster
Samara Foster, Ph.D.,
CCREC Assistant Director
Growing Equity from the Ground Up: Toward New Possibilities: Growing Equity Grows Amidst Transitions

by Ethan Chang

Since its inception in December 2013, Growing Equity from the Ground Up, a community-based project aimed at preparing a new generation of grassroots leadership to transform the food system in Oakland, CA, has steadily gained momentum.

More than twenty organizations have come together to realize a vision of implementing an urban gardening, farming, community organizing, and policy advocacy training program. In the spring of 2015, Growing Equity and other Oakland grassroots organizations, in collaboration with officials from the City of Oakland and Alameda County, secured a commitment from The California Endowment to acquire some parcels of land in east and west Oakland that were being auctioned for tax liens. As the project continues to evolve, we wanted to take a moment to look back on the history of the project and to honor our participating partners whose commitment and daily efforts have helped to sustain this important work.

Tapping Into History to Build for the Future

The Growing Equity project emanates from a neglected history of Oakland, which was once known as the “breadbasket of the Bay.” Like the fertile soil that has been concealed by slabs of asphalt and concrete, the latent knowledge and rich cultural practices within the Oakland community have been weighed down by deficit narratives that frame the city as an urban slum overrun by crime and violence. Given these competing narratives of Oakland, the Growing Equity collaborative began by asking a basic question: could healthy food be a foundation for strategic organizing to literally “grow equity” and mend the social fragmentation that the current food system helps to sustain?

From the initial stages of collaboration, our community partners have guided the vision of Growing Equity by emphasizing a need to confront the history of slavery and to challenge the enduring stigmas of farm labor. Unlike fashionable and transitory “go green” projects, Growing Equity has sought to embed the collaborative’s practices within a history of spiritual and ancestral ties to the land by drawing on the teachings and innovations of leaders like George Washington Carver and by emphasizing social practices rooted in a cultural and ecological model that is attentive to the unique histories of Oakland residents. By reclaiming historical relations with the land, Growing Equity has redefined what it means to “stand your ground” by seeking to cultivate neglected plots of land throughout Oakland and restore both the soil and community relations that have been marred by alienating forms of labor and civic life that the current food and economic systems have produced.

Cultivating Food Systems Activist Leaders

To respond to this challenge, Growing Equity has sought to cultivate gardener-activist food systems leaders, capable of challenging dominant food structures. These community-based transformative agents of change would possess a sense of humility and stewardship for their community, coupled with a deep knowledge of growing healthy food within a sustainable food system, and with an understanding of how to effect policy. This kind of cross-training will provide a new generation of leaders with the tools and dispositions to advance a more equitable, more responsive, and healthier Oakland.

Kelly Carlisle, founder of Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project and a key leader within the Growing Equity project, shared her thoughts on the current status of the collaborative. Reflecting on the origins of the project and offering her hopes for what the future might bring, Carlisle commented, “I hope that Growing Equity becomes even stronger and replicable. The idea is brilliant, having all of these different organizations and two to three different sectors involved to create a coalition to expand food access and knowledge of farming.”

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The Young Adult Civic Engagement Project
Sustaining What’s “In Motion” by Ethan Chang

One of the guiding values behind the Young Adult Civic Engagement (YACE) project has been to better understand and accelerate community-building efforts already “in motion.” As the YACE project turns three, we reflect on the contributions of our community and university partners, whose daily efforts have helped to keep the collaborative itself “in motion” so that one day YACE might realize its vision of advancing equitable community-based solutions throughout Central California, from the foothills on the eastern edge of the San Joaquin Valley to the beaches of the central coast.

Fostering leadership within a community of young activists

Since our initial gathering in December of 2011, in which over twenty community organizations participated, YACE has evolved into a tight-knit partnership driven by a core group of four community-based organizations: the Merced Organizing Project (MOP; Merced), Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement (MILPA; Salinas), Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO; Fresno), and Fathers and Families of San Joaquin (FFSJ; Stockton). The common struggles and shared assets within each of these unique communities have guided YACE’s aim of seeking to rebuild and nourish whole communities by cultivating a new generation of civically engaged young adults.

Guided by a view of community transformation that begins and ends with those who have most at stake, YACE has developed a view of research-driven civic engagement as a way of being, or as the collaborative has articulated, “as a daily practice of carrying oneself that constantly challenges injustice without relinquishing a sense of possibility.” This understanding of civic engagement has motivated YACE participants to craft a fellowship program that envisages training young adults to serve multiple community roles: as key capacity-building and contributing members for community organizations, as researchers conducting equity-oriented community-based projects, as organizers coordinating community events, and as community advocates who foster social ties throughout communities and train fellow adult leaders to work in community. By cultivating “cadres of critically conscious civic leaders,” YACE seeks to link efforts aimed at transforming the entire Central California region.

Developing research questions collaboratively at one of many YACE meetings

‘From grassroots to treetops and treetops to grassroots’

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with a few of our community partners and to hear their thoughts and aspirations for the future of the project. Juan Pineda of MILPA reflected on his organization’s participation in YACE and expressed excitement in witnessing what he described as, “the willingness of folks to collaborate from grassroots to treetops and treetops to grassroots.” The willingness of both community and university partners to challenge traditional models of social change served as inspiration for Pineda and encouraged MILPA to continue participating in the collaborative. Additionally, Pineda shared his long-term hopes for YACE and his home community of Salinas: “If we can have the university work in the neighborhood in partnership . . . that’s what I want. That’s what I want to see. They [young people] should not have to go to Oakland. It should be in Coachella, Stockton, Salinas, Hollister, Greenfield. I think developing a community institution that’s not for charity, but for a people to serve their community . . . that’s what I hope to see.”

Guided by this vision of a community-based institution that cultivates civically engaged young leaders, the YACE project is currently seeking a source of sustainable funding to initiate the fellowship program. Anticipating funding for YACE, Leoncio Vásquez Santos of CBDIO stated, “My hope is that somehow we find people interested in this effort. [. . . ] that our funders get attention of this and that they really look into the work that we are going to be doing because in our experience working with our communities for the last twenty years, we are responding to their immediate needs, but also retain those who come into our doors to build their leadership skills and not necessarily continue providing the immediate assistance. This project can retain them in the longer term . . . to build their knowledge, their experience, so they can advocate and fight for their own rights.” To enable community-based organizations to retain young leaders and move beyond immediate remedies remains one of YACE’s long-term transformative goals, and Santos’s vision of justice in which members of the community take control of their own destinies offers a useful reminder of the initial beliefs that have steered the evolution of the YACE project since its inception.

YACE remains very much “in motion” and the vision of YACE expressed in the words of Pineda and Santos remains energizing for the partnership. As we work together in these next months to respond to invitations for major proposals from The California Endowment and the W.T. Grant Foundations, CCREC remains grateful for our community and university partners whose persistence and commitment to the project demonstrates their incessant belief that young adults can and will be the agents of change to help realize a more equitable California.
CCREC Ethics Project Update

The CCREC Ethics Project team – Ron Glass, Natalie Baloy, and Sheeva Sabati – is well into its development of a casebook designed to enable researchers to engage deeply with the ethical dimensions of their community-based and collaborative work. More than thirty equity-oriented collaborative community-based researchers have been interviewed, and this summer we will be interviewing community partners, to gather stories to inform our writing. Our cases, or short stories and dialogues, have been successfully trialed at several conferences this spring, and our most recent publication appeared this winter in *Theory and Research in Education* [13(1), 23-37]. Our Ethics Project has been supported by two major grants from the Spencer Foundation.

We are excited about an invitational interdisciplinary conference that will bring together foundational scholars in collaborative and community-based research, members of social science research associations’ committees on ethics, prominent scholar-activists, and community leaders. We are designing an interactive, dialogical two-day gathering that will take place in Santa Cruz in February 2016. Together, we will examine the difficult dilemmas in social science research ethics and community-based approaches to research to unsettle traditional ways of thinking about and enacting ethical research.

We continue to have rich conversations with each other and with a vibrant network of scholars, activists, and scholar-activists to develop our work and writing. This spring we have participated in the annual meetings of the Philosophy of Education Society, the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, the Association of American Geographers, the American Educational Research Association, and the Association of Public Philosophy. In addition, we are the conveners of the Ethics Working Group of URBAN (Urban Research Based Action Network), and are pursuing collaborative reflection and writing processes with this national network of engaged scholars.

Growing Equity

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So that’s been difficult . . . I’d like to put in my deep respect for everyone that is involved with the project. It’s hard work to be making sure that people are on phone calls. A lot of time and energy has been expended to make this project move. I want to honor that and respect the vision of it.”

At this stage of transition for the Growing Equity project, we would like to join with Carlisle in acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead and simultaneously honor and center the efforts of our community partners whose struggles have been vital to sustaining this important work. Notably, Growing Equity has continued to flourish due to the committed efforts of the Community Food and Justice Coalition (CFJC), in particular, Courtney Gonzales, Jessy Gill, and Armando Nieto. As the backbone of the Growing Equity collaborative, CFJC’s behind-the-scenes efforts have been pivotal in propelling the project forward.

Now completing its second year of the partnership, the Growing Equity from the Ground Up project remains rooted in the early beliefs upon which this project was founded. “The political will and interest is here. There can be a movement,” remarked one participant at the first Growing Equity convening. The founding heart and spirit of the Growing Equity collaborative – inspired by the Prophetic Justice Ministry of the Reverend Daniel Buford, a CCREC Advisory Board member – remain driving sources of energy to sustain the development of this unique effort to reimagine and recreate urban food systems. We thank our partners for allowing us to join in this journey.

CCREC Fellows make a difference through collaborative research

Street Scholars Peer Mentoring Program leveraging funding and developing partnerships

CCREC Fellow Elizabeth Marlow and community partner Ron Moss, Executive Director of the Gamble Institute, received a $39,000 grant from Merritt College to continue their Street Scholars Peer Mentoring Program. This project works with formerly incarcerated college students and was seeded by a CCREC Planning and Development grant.

They are also developing a partnership with Oakland Unite to make sure formerly incarcerated men and women are supported in their efforts to be successful academically and in life. Finally, their paper, Peer Mentoring and Male Parolees: A CBPR Pilot Study, was just published in the most recent edition of the journal, *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, 9(1), 91-100, Spring 2015. The article is available online at [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/progress_in_community_health_partnerships/research_education_and_action/v009/9.1.marlow.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/progress_in_community_health_partnerships/research_education_and_action/v009/9.1.marlow.html).

A course syllabus informed by elements of collaborative research

CCREC Fellow Nigel Hatton, Assistant Professor of Literature at UC Merced, will be teaching a course titled, "African American Lifeworlds, Global Thinking & Human Rights," in the American Studies Program at the University of Würzburg in Germany this summer. Parts of the course curriculum are informed by collaborative research philosophy and praxis.

Santa Cruz Commons project continues to facilitate a teaching-learning community

Through Santa Cruz Commons, UC Santa Cruz Professor Emerita and CCREC Fellow Helene Moglen has been co-teaching (with Sheila Namir, a psychologist and psychoanalyst) a creative writing workshop for local veterans. Santa Cruz Commons is a project that facilitates the collaboration of community activists and activist academics. This summer, Dr. Moglen will be teaching in a UC Veterans Summer Writing Workshop from June 20-25 on the UC Santa Barbara campus.

CCREC Fellow Helene Moglen

Dr. Moglen and Dr. Namir presented the keynote address at the 2013 conference, "Narrative-Making in the Aftermath of War," at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at UC Santa Barbara. In their paper, "Fighting for Words," they describe the collaborative process of the group and consider the ways in which it enabled participants to engage the effects of their own and one another’s post-traumatic stress.

For more information about joining CCREC as a Fellow or Affiliate, visit [http://ccrec.ucsc.edu/join-ccrec](http://ccrec.ucsc.edu/join-ccrec)
CCREC Mission

CCREC is a University of California multicampus research program and initiative that engages university researchers, community-based organizations, and policymakers in Equity-Oriented Collaborative, Community-Based Research projects to achieve creative solutions to the interrelated challenges in the economy, education, employment, environment, food systems, housing, and public health.

CCREC is committed to incubating and supporting ethically informed collaborative research, preparing a new generation of engaged scholars and community leaders, and creating institutional capacity to build this emergent field.

Join CCREC

CCREC is currently accepting applications for Fellows, Affiliates, and Partners. Join us in making a difference in California’s communities and beyond!

Check out our website for more information at ccrec.ucsc.edu/join-CCREC.

Become a CCREC Funding Partner

Please help us continue our important work by becoming a funding partner. Contact Ron Glass at rglass@ucsc.edu or 831-459-5188 or visit ccrec.ucsc.edu/donate for more information.

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