Message from the Director

The past six months have been busy and productive for CCREC, although the highlight is our award of $277,550 from the Spencer Foundation to support our work focused on the ethical issues in equity-oriented collaborative community-based research.

When scholars and communities collaborate in strategic research partnerships to solve pressing social problems, more strongly warranted research findings can result, which in turn can lead to more responsive and equitable policy solutions. Yet the ethical and political questions raised by these collaborations are not adequately addressed in existing professional codes of ethics nor in the common standards for the protection of the human subjects of research. The CCREC ethics project aims to close these gaps.

CCREC wins major Spencer Foundation grant!

Ethical Issues in Equity-Oriented Collaborative Community-Based Research

CCREC will develop and disseminate scholarly papers on collaborative research ethics, as well as a Code of Ethics and Casebook and other training materials to guide scholars, research administrators, community organizations, and policy makers.


The Spencer Foundation grant enables us to investigate the special complexities related to foundational tenets of research ethics, particularly concerning informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. For example, what counts as adequate representation of communities in collaborative research partnerships (especially when communities are deeply divided on equity-related issues), and how can such ‘representatives’ legitimately consent to studies that illuminate those underlying conflicts in ways that can seem to exacerbate the conflicts? Further, when a community studies itself, and/or when the research processes utilize new digital media to document daily life and disseminate information about what is discovered, how can these collaborative projects fully protect the identities of informants and participants?

Similarly complex and fraught ethical, political, and epistemic questions arise in relation to tensions between traditional academic criteria for knowledge claims and diverse community-based forms of knowing. We will disentangle and clarify this nexus of issues and formulate principles and guidelines that will maintain respect for all the partners and their contributions.

The Spencer Foundation grant also supports our examination of the ethical basis of equity-oriented policy advocacy. The traditional university insistence on political neutrality and disinterested scholarship, coupled with governmental limits on...
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partisan activities by universities that enjoy tax-exempt status, seem to weigh against the kind of research undertaken within CCREC projects. Yet compelling ethical arguments may support preferential commitments to disadvantaged communities and to policy options that promise a greater measure of equity, and we will examine these to see if they can overcome the legitimate constraints and concerns about how universities participate in the public sphere.

As we work through these multifaceted, difficult, and often contentious matters, we will collect paradigmatic cases of equity-oriented collaborative community-based research, and then incorporate them into a casebook and training materials for emerging scholars, community leaders, and policy makers.

The importance of our work in these areas is repeatedly brought home by the increasing calls in the national and regional press for research universities to be more relevant to the crises confronting communities, and, at the same time, by the increasing emergence of criticisms (most of which are uninformed) of engaged scholarship. CCREC’s work can establish broadly accepted basic frameworks to insure that universities, researchers, communities, and policy-makers have the guidance needed to make engaged scholarship meet the highest standards of academic integrity, respect of persons, and civic responsibility.

We will be reporting on our progress throughout the fifteen month term of the grant, and we invite our newsletter readers to contact us with your own cases for us to consider in our research and deliberations.

-Ron Glass, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy of Education
UC Santa Cruz

CCREC Highlights

CCREC is wrapping up its second year of operation as a University of California Multicampus Research Program Initiative.

What is Collaborative Research?  CCREC’s new video blog explores answers.

CCREC is starting a new video blog series in which CCREC Fellows will address the question, “How do you define collaborative research?” Through our blog, we are hoping to engage our Fellows in conversation with each other, other engaged scholars, and the general public. Watch and participate at ccrec.ucsc.edu/blog.

CCREC welcomes Dr. Anne Newman to the Staff.

We are excited to announce that Anne Newman, Ph.D. is joining CCREC as a full-time Researcher on the “Ethical Issues in Equity Oriented Collaborative Community-Based Research” project, funded by the Spencer Foundation.

Dr. Newman’s research and numerous publications focus at the intersection of contemporary political philosophy and education policy. Dr. Newman received her Ph.D. from Stanford University’s School of Education, served on the faculty of Washington University, St. Louis, and was awarded a National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. Please join us in welcoming her to the CCREC team!

CCREC is pleased to announce a new Webmaster.

Bardia Keyoumarsi has joined the CCREC team as our new Undergraduate Student Assistant. Bardia supports the development and maintenance of CCREC’s website in addition to providing staff technical support. Bardia is in his junior year at UCSC as a Computer Engineering major with a concentration in System Programming.

The CCREC network continues to grow.

CCREC now has thirty-four Faculty Fellows, including scholars in the social sciences, public health, education, the humanities, and computer science. See ccrec.ucsc.edu/people/fellows.

CCREC has also added a number of affiliates and other partners. See ccrec.ucsc.edu/people for a full list of the people, institutions, and organizations that comprise the CCREC network.

Check out our website at ccrec.ucsc.edu/join-CCREC for more information about how you can join us in making a difference in California’s communities and beyond.

CCREC is now offering travel awards.

CCREC is requesting applications for travel awards of up to $500 to support early career researchers and doctoral students in the University of California whose collaborative research has been selected for presentation at academic conferences. See ccrec.ucsc.edu/projects/training-career-development for more information.

CCREC releases first policy brief: “How can high schools help to increase voter registration?”

CCREC Policy Briefs are concise, informative, and timely policy-oriented analyses that provide background and recommendations to policymakers and the general public on some of California’s most pressing challenges.

See ccrec.ucsc.edu/research/policy-briefs.

Update on CCREC Supported Project: “Worker’s Voice in the Greening of California”

“Worker’s Voice in the Greening of California: The Intersections of Work, Health and the Environment” is one of the four innovative research projects that was awarded a CCREC seed grant for the 2011-2012 Academic Year. Meredith Minkler, Professor of Health and Social Behavior in the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley, is the Principal Investigator for this project and is working alongside a multidisciplinary team of professors, students, workers, employers, and organizations that are collaborating to bring attention to California’s growing green economy and, specifically, “green cleaning.” This project seeks to evaluate the health impacts of green cleaning products from the perspective of the low wage workers who use them (janitors, home care workers, hotel housekeepers, domestic workers, hospital cleaning staff, etc.).

Progress updates include:

• A meeting was held last fall with California’s Occupational Health Branch (OHB), which provided initial research about the correlation between work-related asthma cases and the exposure to cleaning products. OHB was then asked to join the project’s collaboration.

• The San Francisco Department of Environment held a meeting, which enabled the participants to learn and discuss green cleaning practices with employers and worker representatives.

• In mid-March, the first roundtable with workers and worker representatives was held; similar meetings with employers will follow.

• Efforts are underway to reach out to organizations that represent diverse worker categories (e.g. Building Skills Partnerships and Green Schools Initiative) to see about their interest in participating in this project.
Featured CCREC Fellow: Dr. Robin DeLugan

CCREC Undergraduate Student Research Assistant, Brooke Velasquez, interviewed Dr. DeLugan, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts at UC Merced, regarding her project called “Resourcing and Critical Reflection on PAR Capacity Building in the San Joaquin Valley.” This project was awarded a CCREC Planning and Development Grant last spring. Below is an article based on the interview.

Dr. Robin DeLugan is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California Merced and is Co-Chair of Community University Research and Action for Justice (CURAJ), a multidisciplinary regional research network that emphasizes engagement with grassroots organizations and local communities in California’s Central Valley. With interests in community building, collective identity and belonging, Dr. DeLugan’s research encompasses a wide range of focuses including the affects that globalization (including migration) and neoliberalism have had on the meaning of national belonging in postwar El Salvador in the 21st century, and indigenous people and nation-state dynamics, including contemporary migration from Latin America to California. As a member of The Partnership for Assessment of Communities (PAC), Dr. DeLugan is interested in how social indicator research improves the understandings of community health in California’s Central Valley. PAC is a project that uses community-engagement research methodology, which includes collaborators from three institutions of higher education working with student researchers and community members to develop a multi-year study of California’s SJV.

When asked, “Why focus on California’s Central Valley?” Professor DeLugan responded:

“The Central Valley has so many pressing issues--it’s the poorest part of the state of California, and it has been compared to Appalachia. Every disparity you can think of, whether it is employment, low education rates, high teen births, environmental problems like air quality and health care access, the Central Valley ranks the highest (or lowest, depending on how you want to look at it) in terms of impacted populations--there is a lot of work to be done. Although there is a fairly decent activist network, the Central Valley is a big regional area that is not very well connected. There aren’t a lot of regional ways that social and environmental justice activists are linked or networked, but it is happening slowly.”

In 2006, Dr. DeLugan had just started working as an Assistant Professor at UC Merced as one of the founding Anthropology faculty hired at the new university when she was asked to join a small network of individuals that would later become CURAJ. At the conference, “The Other Face of the San Joaquin Valley,” which was held the previous Fall, Mary Louise Frampton brought together a range of stakeholders including community activists, activist lawyers, policy makers, academics, and other individuals who had been focusing on the living conditions in the Central Valley or who had been working with Central Valley youth. From that conference, an interested group was formed with the common aim that UC Merced and other UC universities could do more in terms of social justice in the Central Valley. Dr. DeLugan comments, “I was immediately asked to meet with a group of folks who had attended the conference, and I was drawn into those first few meetings where we decided on the name.” From there, CURAJ was born.

“CURAJ is a network,” describes Dr. DeLugan. “We have faculty from UC Davis, primarily Jonathan London and Isao Fujimoto, Mary Louise Frampton from UC Berkeley, and Jorge Aguilar and myself from UC Merced. We also have Rey Leon, who is our community go-to person, and he has experience working with young people doing environmental justice and community-based research in rural Fresno through his organization, San Joaquin Valley LEAP. We are also connected with a host of representatives from California Rural Legal Assistance, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment, Madera Coalition for Justice, Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship, Latino Issues Forum, and Youth in Focus. In these last few years, some of these groups ceased to exist, which shows the fragility of our non-profits trying to do good work in the Central Valley. Overall, however, it’s a strong network of folks that believe there is a role for the university and a role for research.”

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Featured CCREC Fellow: Dr. Robin DeLugan

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CURAJ's first demonstration project is “The South Dos Palos Project” in which CURAJ partnered with California Rural Legal Assistance, Policy Link in Oakland, and the George Washington Carver Center Board in South Dos Palos to design a community needs assessment, conduct research, and produce the data that is going to help the residents of South Dos Palos illuminate the issues and priorities in their community, as well as help them in grant writing. Dr. DeLugan comments on the progress of The South Dos Palos Project: “It has gone well. We hope it might be a model for other ways we can connect with local communities. I really liked it, because it used undergraduates to conduct the research, and the undergraduates were in different disciplines across the school. Whatever it is our faculty and students are learning, there is a role for them in these community based projects.”

Currently, Dr. DeLugan is the Principal Investigator for CURAJ's new project, “Resourcing and Critical Reflection on PAR Capacity Building in the San Joaquin Valley.” The project stems from over five years of effort by CURAJ to establish and foster trusting relationships among California’s Central San Joaquin Valley (SJV) grassroots organizations and UC researchers from Berkeley, Davis, and Merced. The main goal for this project is to advance community-based collaborative research in the San Joaquin Valley by establishing a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Resource Center in Fresno.

The Grand Opening of the PAR Resource Center was held on February 14th, 2012 at 2502 Merced St. in Fresno. “We wanted it to be on Valentine’s Day, because we wanted to say ‘we love our community,’” remarks Professor DeLugan. “This was Rey Leon’s idea.” From 3-5 pm there was an intergenerational panel of speakers who knew the value, potential, and power of doing this kind of research. At the reception, Isao Fujimoto from UC Davis connected the CURAJ initiative to a history of social justice activism and action research in the Central Valley. Furthermore, an oversized check representing the CCREC funds that were awarded to develop the PAR Center was presented to Rey Leon. A video from Fresno’s Pan Valley Institute was also screened at the reception, which featured leaders of local ethnic communities who emphasize the important link between cultural identity and civic engagement.

A popular education approach will be used at the new center to train community members on how to identify and frame research questions around environmental and health issues that affect their lives. “Who knows best about an issue but the person that is experiencing it first hand?” asks Dr. DeLugan. You can have the academic view of things, but if you’re living in a contaminated environment or you’re living in poverty, you’re going to have a certain knowledge and understanding that needs to be valued.”

The new center will also serve as a meeting place for those involved in ongoing community-based research in the region, thus encouraging research collaboration. “Having a PAR resource center is novel. Period,” states Dr. DeLugan. “Having it on any campus is novel, but having it in the community and having a place where everyday people can do research on the conditions of their community is truly novel and important.”

Dr. DeLugan explained that a participatory research network that includes like-minded individuals working across disciplines and university campuses engenders faculty dialogue and support for this type of collaborative, community research: “CCREC offers a broader institution or center of gravity, so to speak, where everybody who is involved with CCREC is doing this kind of work. They may not be doing it in the Central Valley, but they are doing this kind of work in different disciplines, at different UC campuses. I can see that a young person starting out who wants to do this kind of work, or who is a beginning professor, might wonder what kind of support there is for doing this kind of research. I think CCREC is ahead of the game.”

For more from Dr. DeLugan, see her video blog coming soon on the CCREC website at http://ccrec.ucsc.edu/blog.

Photos: On page 3: PAR resource center opening ceremony (left to right) Robin DeLugan (UC Merced), Isao Fujimoto (UC Davis), Jonathan London (UC Davis), Mary Louise Frampton (UC Berkeley Law School), and Rey Leon (San Joaquin Valley LEAP); below: Jonathan London (UC Davis) at the podium. (Photos courtesy of Robin DeLugan)
CCREC Awards Five Collaborative Research Planning & Development Grants for 2012-2013

CCREC holds an annual competition for planning and development grants to support research projects that use collaborative methodologies to address the interrelated crises affecting the state of California. The active engagement of communities and policy makers in the research process relies on careful early planning to bring stakeholders together, identify the research questions, and design the research as a whole. CCREC recognizes that this process is time consuming and requires resources, but is rarely supported in standard grant processes as it is typically expected that these will be already completed at the time of application. CCREC aims to promote collaborative research by providing grants that support these crucial early collaborations and processes of research design.

This spring, five innovative and important projects were selected.

Mary Louise Frampton, Professor of Law and the Faculty Director of the Henderson Center for Social Justice at the UC Berkeley School of Law, is the Principal Investigator for a project called “Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)/Participatory Action Research (PAR) Legal Research Pilot Project.” This project will establish a pilot program at UC Berkeley and UC Davis Law Schools to support graduate research that embraces democratic principles of collaborative research in California’s San Joaquin and greater Central Valley. Building on over five years of research and partnerships in the San Joaquin Valley (SJV), this project would be a first step towards establishing a program that cultivates long-term partnerships with community associations and San Joaquin Valley nonprofits; training professional students in Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)/Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodologies for legal and policy research; exposing graduate students to the array of ethical issues that underlie CBPR and PAR; and creating a multi-campus effort to support and invest in the SJV.

George Lipsitz, Professor of Black Studies and Sociology at UC Santa Barbara, is the Principal Investigator for a project called “Immigrant Women Workers and Social Change: The Community Transformational Organizing Strategy of Asian Immigrant Women.” Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) is a community based organization that has worked since 1983 to build the long term capacity for leadership among low wage and limited English speaking women. An estimated 8,000 women have participated in AIWA’s seven stage training program, the Community Transformational Organizing Strategy (CTOS). With this project, AIWA will participate in the development of a unique community-campus research project to evaluate, measure, and learn from its community organizing and leadership development activities, and to see if the CTOS strategy can be a model that other organizations might replicate and that scholars might use to construct general theories about community organizing and the promotion of grassroots leadership.

Elizabeth Marlow, Assistant Adjunct Professor of Family Health Care Nursing at UC San Francisco, is the Principal Investigator for a project called “The Leadership Team: A Peer Mentoring Program for Paroled Adults.” More than two-thirds of paroled adults have a substance use disorder (SUD). Thirty-two percent of parolees committed crimes under the influence of drugs and alcohol, and 17% committed crimes to support their substance use. Over 60% of state parolees return to prison within one year of release. Only 41% have completed high school, even fewer have any college level education. Individuals with less than a high school education are more likely to have SUD, commit crimes, and be incarcerated as compared to high school graduates and persons attending college. Substance use recovery and educational access can support the reintegration of paroled men and women. Reintegration is defined as desistance from substance use and criminal activity, stable health, stable living arrangements and regular employment, and positive family and community involvement. The combination of socioeconomic disadvantage and entrenchment in criminal and correctional systems makes successful reintegration difficult for many parolees to realize. Peer mentoring has demonstrated efficacy in supporting at-risk populations’ engagement in services and promotion of healthy behaviors. However, peer mentorship as a pathway for paroled adults’ reintegration has not been fully explored. The purpose of the project is to expand on the work of a current community-based participatory research (CBPR) effort by a team of paroled adults, community based organizations, and academic researchers to develop a peer-mentoring program and evaluate its effectiveness on rates of SUD, educational achievement, and recidivism in paroled adults enrolled in Peralta Community Colleges in Alameda County.

Beth Rose Middleton, Assistant Professor of Native American Studies and Director of the Environmental Justice Project at UC Davis, is the Principal Investigator for a project called “Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Tribal Collaboration Effectiveness Study.” While the benefits of Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) are extensive and widely recognized, there remain significant barriers to tribal participation in the IRWM plans and project creation. This method of water and land use planning is meant to be collaborative between stakeholders and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). DWR recognizes the need to identify and address challenges before IRWM planning and resulting projects can be truly effective for tribal communities. The project’s focused investigation of DWR’s IRWM Grant Program, the IRWM Plans (IRWMP) that it funds, and the resulting regional watershed management projects, will identify best practices and possible solutions to current limitations. The project’s recommendations to DWR and to IRWM groups can then be applied to IRWM grant guidelines and to the updates required for each regional IRWMP to better serve the needs of all regional stakeholders, including Tribes.

Craig Reinarman, Professor of Sociology at UC Santa Cruz, is the Principal Investigator for a project called “Smart On Crime: A Community Collaborative on Alternatives to Incarceration.” Smart On Crime is a consortium of local elected and criminal justice system officials, leaders of community-based organizations, and UCSC faculty and students who have come together to support and further develop community alternatives to incarceration in response to Prison Realignment (AB109). This project has three purposes: conduct public policy forums on criminal justice policies and alternatives to incarceration; convene community engagement workshops to encourage community involvement in and support for community programs that provide alternatives to incarceration and other key services; and conduct research on how these alternatives are being used to reduce strain on the County Jail (including ethnographic portraits of the community alternatives, depth interviews with the first 20 offenders to go through the alternative process, and the development of a complete data set on the past history, present processing, and future outcomes of offenders served by community alternatives to jail under AB109).

Check out the CCREC website for project updates at ccrec.ucsc.edu/projects/funded.

CCREC will release another Request for Proposals for planning and development grants in January, 2013. Details will be posted on the CCREC website at ccrec.ucsc.edu/projects/rfps.
CCREC Mission

CCREC fosters a more equitable California by addressing the interconnected crises in the economy, education, employment, environment, health, housing, and nutrition.

CCREC links university researchers, community-based organizations, and policy-makers in collaborative projects to achieve creative solutions to the problems in our communities.

CCREC prepares a new generation of engaged scholars by coordinating and focusing University of California system-wide efforts to support collaborative research that makes a difference in our communities.

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