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Institute for
Social Transformation

Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Service
at UC Santa Cruz

April 2021

Executive Summary

Campus + Community is a developing center at UCSC aimed at making visible the vital work that UCSC faculty, staff, and students perform in local communities as well as supporting ongoing and new community partnerships to have lasting effects in the community. As one of its first tasks, C + C undertook an inventory of community engagement on campus. A total of 150 faculty and staff members completed the survey and indicated they had participated in community-engaged teaching, research, or service in the past five years or since arriving at UCSC (if they were on campus fewer than five years). Key takeaways from the survey include:
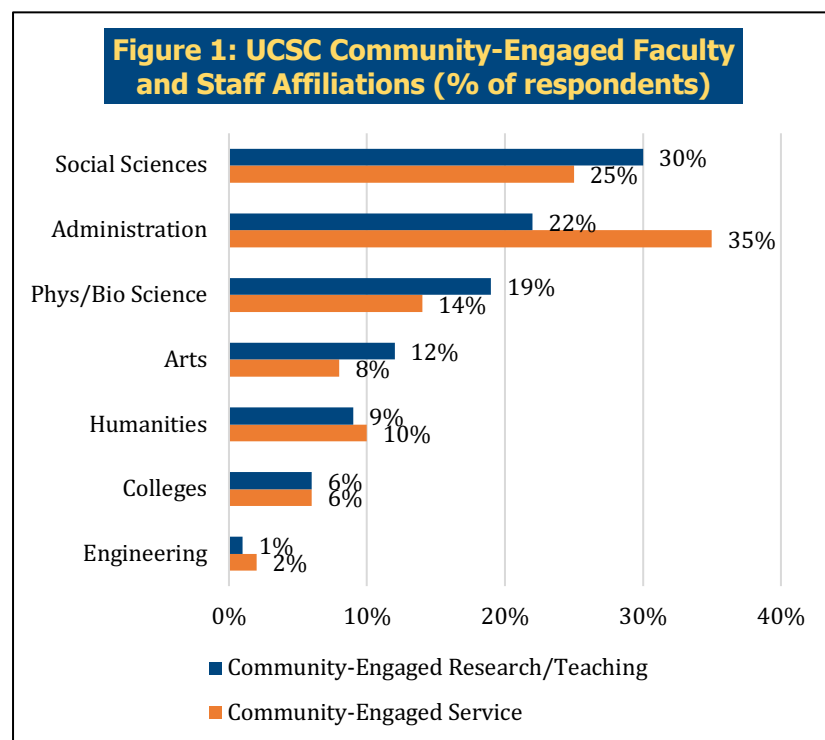
- All academic divisions, central administration, the colleges, and many other units were represented in the survey. Social Sciences has the highest rate of community engagement in teaching and research whereas administration (especially non-academic staff working in such units as student resource centers and the arboretum) is the most involved in service.

- In total, we learned about 176 teaching and research projects and 153 service projects over the past five years, with substantial numbers of respondents reporting more than one engagement.

- The top four sectors that projects addressed were: education; health, mental health and well-being; environment; and humanities. Other areas included arts, economy or labor, social justice and organizing, and technology.

- A hallmark of UCSC's community engagement has been its inclusion of undergraduates. Community-engaged research or teaching projects (including service-learning) involved an estimated 2,566 undergraduates and service projects involved an estimated 339.

- Projects received different kinds of support, including from external funders and internally from UCSC, or both. Research and teaching projects were most likely to receive external support.

- Respondents' ongoing needs include: additional resources, infrastructure to support coordination and collaboration across the university, better alignment with existing faculty and staff obligations, and a more systematic and equitable acknowledgement of community-engaged work.

- The vast majority of faculty (85%) and staff (75%) respondents were interested in a future community collaboration.

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Campus + Community is a developing center at UCSC aimed at making visible the vital work that UCSC faculty, staff, and students perform in local communities as well as supporting ongoing and new community partnerships to have lasting effects in the community and on campus. As one of its first tasks, C + C undertook an inventory of community engagement on campus. A total of 150 faculty and staff members completed the survey and indicated they had participated in community-engaged teaching, research, or service in the past five years or since arriving at UCSC (if they were on campus fewer than five years). In this brief report, we describe the respondents and the extent of their work, the kinds of projects in which they engaged, external funding and UCSC support they have received, and their desired additional resources and support from UCSC.

UCSC community engagement activities stem from all five academic divisions, the residential colleges, and the campus' non-divisional administrative units, such as its student resource centers and the arboretum (Figure 1). This breadth of community-engaged research, teaching, and service demonstrates the culture of UCSC, relevance

Figure 1: UCSC Community-Engaged Faculty and Staff Affiliations (% of respondents)

Division	Community-Engaged Research/Teaching	Community-Engaged Service
Social Sciences	30%	25%
Administration	22%	35%
Phys/Bio Science	19%	14%
Arts	12%	8%
Humanities	9%	10%
Colleges	6%	6%
Engineering	1%	2%

of UCSC scholarship, its strong mission for providing students with experiential learning, and the service orientations of many UCSC employees across the university. We grouped together research and teaching projects in the survey because it is sometimes the case that instructors combine community-engaged teaching with their own research through their courses. This is a very popular approach at UCSC and indeed one of the hallmarks of UCSC's approach to community-engaged scholarship. Service refers to work in the community that is not primarily related to one's research or teaching, for example sitting on a local board of advisors.

Of the 150 respondents who had existing community-engaged work, 64 (43%) were faculty and 86 (57%) were staff (Table 1). Considerably more non-academic staff, whose jobs do not entail research or teaching, participated than academic staff; whereas faculty were engaged in primarily research or a combination of research/teaching and service,

Table 1: Types of Community Engagement for UCSC Faculty and Staff			
Community-engaged…	Faculty	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff
Research/teaching (only)	20	6	13
Service (only)	6	7	37
Research/ teaching and service (both)	38	6	17
Total Number of Respondents	64	19	67

staff were overall more likely to engage in service. The subset of academic staff who participated were equally likely to engage in research/teaching, service, or both. In both cases, the duration of community engagement varied. Whereas some projects were just starting, others had been ongoing for 40 or more years! Many respondents reported ongoing collaborations with community organizations for 10 or more years, particularly in research and service projects.

Table 2: Extent of Community Engagement by UCSC Faculty and Staff			
In the past five years or since you came to UCSC:	Faculty	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff
Community-engaged research/teaching projects			
1	32	8	22
2	17	2	4
3 or more	9	2	4
Community-engaged service projects			
1	33	10	44
2	7	2	4
3 or more	4	1	6

Respondents shared information about up to seven research/teaching projects and up to five service projects (Table 2). Most had just one to share, but some UCSC faculty and staff are engaged in multiple research/teaching and service projects, often at once. The largest number of respondents were non-academic staff, but faculty were the most likely to have multiple projects in the past five years (or since they came to UCSC). Faculty, not surprisingly, were also the most likely to mix

research/teaching with service projects in their work.

In total, we learned about 176 teaching and research projects and 153 service projects. In the survey, we asked respondents to describe in more detail their projects, including whether they were research, teaching, or a combination of the two (Table 3). For faculty this combination of research and teaching together is the most common approach. For academic and non-academic staff who are less likely to be engaged in research, teaching only is slightly more prevalent than combining teaching and research.

| Table 3: Combining Community-Engaged Research and Teaching			
Community-engaged…	Faculty	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff
Research (only)	30%	10%	16%
Teaching (only)	30%	47%	45%
Research and teaching (both)	40%	43%	39%
Total Number of Projects	102	21	44

Table 4: Sector in which Community-Engaged Research or Teaching Occurred	
Education	57%
Health, Mental Health & Well-Being	18%
Environment	12%
Humanities	10%
Social Justice & Organizing	9%
Arts	7%
Criminal Justice & Law	7%
Social and Family Services	7%
Economy & Labor	6%
Food and Housing Security	4%
Technology/Engineering/Architecture	3%
Youth out of School	3%
Total Number of Projects	176

We asked those who engaged in community-engaged research or teaching the sector(s) in which they concentrated (Table 4; respondents could list as many sectors as they wanted, and so the percentages do not sum to 100). The vast majority of projects included the education sector, followed by those focused on health, mental health or well-being. Most projects were concentrated in sectors that focus on social justice issues. Even those that may not appear related to social justice (for example technology), had an explicit social justice focus.

A hallmark of UCSC's community-engaged research and teaching has been its inclusion of undergraduates. We asked respondents to estimate how many undergraduates were involved in their research and service projects as well as in their courses and learned that this work serves many UCSC

Figure 2: Number of Undergraduates Involved in Community-Engaged Work

Research/Teaching 2,566
Service 339

undergraduates (Figure 2). Respondents who were involved in community-engaged research or teaching reported serving 2,566 undergraduates in total through their work (in some cases they reported annual numbers and in others it was across the duration of their
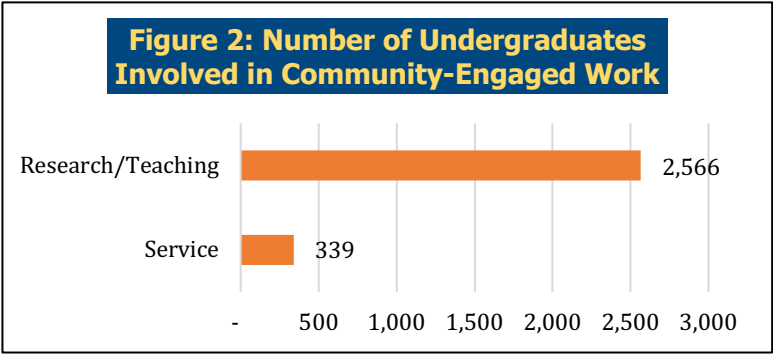
project, or the past five years if it had been ongoing longer). Service projects were much less likely to involved students, but still, a total of 339 undergraduates were engaged in the community through the non-academic service projects of UCSC faculty, academic and non-academic staff.

Table 5: External and Campus Support for Community-Engaged Work		
	Community-Engaged Research/Teaching	Community-Engaged Service
External Funding	46%	28%
UCSC Resources or Support	43%	14%
Total Number of Projects	161	153

Projects received different kinds of support, including from external funders and internally from UCSC, or both (Table 5; the columns are not mutually exclusive). In total, 46% of teaching/ research projects garnered external financial support and 43% received resources or support from UCSC. External funders were mainly foundations, although some received funds from community organizations, corporations, or donors. The University supported 43% of research/teaching projects with a combination of funding (e.g., from faculty senate grants) or in the form of support from organizations like the Institute for Social Transformation. Fewer (28%) community-engaged service projects received external funding as well as UCSC resources or support (14%).

Across survey respondents whose work was externally funded, there were 76 unique institutional sources identified (a number of faculty also identified individual donors). These fall into four general classifications: Private philanthropy (54%), which includes Santa Cruz area community foundations, family foundations, and regional and national-level grant makers; County, state and federal agencies (24%), including local school districts, county and state-level commissions, and agencies such as the National Science Foundation and US Department of Education, among others; UC and UCSC initiatives (13%), including a UCSC student fee voted on by students in support of community-engaged research; and Businesses/Corporations (9%). These findings suggest that there has been a sustained interest over the years among a varied group of institutional financial supporters for community-engaged scholarship, mainly research.

We asked respondents in an open-ended question what kinds of support they would like from the university for their community-engaged work and faculty and staff responded with their needs. The most common response was more funding to pay students for their research assistance, to support course development, and for outreach to community partners. This is not surprising given the context of a public research university without existing institutional structures to support community-engaged work. The next most frequent responses involved infrastructure to support coordination and collaboration across the university, including outreach to partners and assistance with event planning and publicity of research results. The third most common response related to recognition and better alignment with existing faculty and staff obligations. Respondents reported a need for campus to more systematically and equitably acknowledge their community-engaged research and teaching, and to align their obligations in research, teaching and

service through community-engaged processes. Finally, a few respondents pointed out the need for a set of ethical guidelines beyond the Institutional Review Board. They noted that their research does not fit neatly into the categories that IRB requires and that this, as well as other university structures, inhibits their community work.

Regardless of their current engagements, respondents were asked if they had plans or desires for future community-engaged work (Table 6). Notably nearly half of faculty respondents were planning for new collaborative work and 85% were interested in a future collaboration. Fewer staff

Table 6: Interest in Future Community-Engaged Work			
	Faculty	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff
Planning a new community-engaged project	45%	32%	17%
Interested in a future collaboration?	85%	73%	70%
Total Number of Respondents	64	22	82

respondents were already planning for future collaborations, but nearly three-quarters were interested in pursuing this kind of work.

This inventory serves as an initial asset mapping of the kinds of community-engaged projects in which faculty and staff engage, as well as the support they need to continue this work. Next steps for the project include a more detailed analysis of specific initiatives as well as establishing networks across different faculty and staff engaged with the similar community-engaged projects or partners. We are also working to develop initiatives that will address the needs identified by survey respondents for greater acknowledgement, alignment, and support of their work.