

UC SANTA CRUZ

Institute for Social Transformation



“Through the Institute for Social Transformation, we’re building relationships among academics, community partners, and policymakers and activating the potential of research as a foundation for transformative change.”

—KATHARYNE MITCHELL, DEAN OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Rooted in the Social Sciences Division at UC Santa Cruz, the Institute for Social Transformation supports innovative scholarship that changes the world. We act as a critical intellectual and social hub, connecting scholars across UC Santa Cruz and partners beyond the university. Together, we’re developing research-based solutions to urgent problems.

Our efforts are focused on:

- **environmental regeneration**
- **democratic revitalization**
- **social justice**
- **equity, access, and opportunity**

Social transformation is a collective process that promotes systemic change in institutions, social relationships, and values. Our approach utilizes three main strategies.

Convene Thought Leaders: We host speakers, conferences, workshops, and public events that draw community activists, scholars, and influencers who are working to build engagement pathways with policymakers.

Support Collaborative Interdisciplinary Research: The institute fosters a changemaker culture across campus by forging boundary-crossing partnerships among faculty, students, and staff. We link with community partners to offer insights into their most pressing questions and curate resources that support activism.

Catalyze Innovative Scholarship: We invest in faculty and students who bring new ideas to long-standing problems. The institute organizes faculty research workshops and provides grant funding for projects with transformative potential.

transform.ucsc.edu





OUR INITIATIVES

As part of our efforts to foster interdisciplinary transformative research, the Institute for Social Transformation supports multiple collaborative research initiatives.

Solidarity Economics

This partnership with the University of Southern California proposes solutions for reshaping the economy in a way that addresses inequality and promotes mutuality.

Right Livelihood College

We house the only North American affiliate of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, which connects students and faculty with international human rights and environmental leaders.

Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN)

We're part of a network of 36 colleges and universities offering curriculum, career development, funding, and experiential learning to help students develop and apply technology for the benefit of society.

Global and Community Health

Faculty from all across campus are studying the medical, environmental, and social determinants of health and developing two new undergraduate programs.

SEACoast

Monthly seminars and collaborative research build an interdisciplinary understanding of the role of social and environmental forces in coastal Southeast Asia.

Campus + Community

This center coordinates and promotes community-engaged scholarship and research activities with nonprofit organizations and local governments.

New Gen Learning

Faculty and graduate students collaborate on inclusive teaching strategies that leverage cultural strengths of children from historically underserved populations.

Urban Environment & Justice

Monthly meetings generate dialogue among faculty working at the intersection of urban development, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

OUR FUNDING PROGRAMS

As part of our efforts to support innovative scholarship, the Institute for Social Transformation operates four main funding programs.

CATALYZE AWARDS

In the first three years of this program alone, we've awarded 34 faculty fellowship grants totaling \$250,000 that have launched new collaborations, developed promising research projects, and boosted research visibility and stakeholder engagement.

EMERGING SCHOLAR SUPPORT

\$5,000 grants support faculty working toward tenure or establishing themselves as leading scholars in their fields by accelerating book manuscript preparation and other influential publications.

BUILDING BELONGING

Over the next five years, we will support up to 500 first-generation, low-income, under-represented students through \$1,500 research fellowships and faculty mentorship.

GLOBAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH WELLBEING AWARDS

As many as 10 students per year will receive awards of up to \$1,000 to conduct research with community health organizations, both locally and globally.

HELP US GROW

To support our work, visit our website at transform.ucsc.edu, or contact Chris Benner, director of the Institute for Social Transformation, at cbenner@ucsc.edu.



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