As we conclude another year under the strain of COVID-19, and all of its impacts, I’m reminded of where we were a year ago and how far the world has come. We now know so much more about the virus and how to prevent its spread, we have vaccines, and we have the promise of drugs that might be able to treat COVID-19 in the near future. And while the world may be forever altered by COVID-19, these medical advances have finally allowed for some collective breathing room and hope, as well as renewed attention to other looming dangers, such as worsening civil discord and the catastrophic effects of climate change.

The year 2021 began with images of Americans storming the halls of the U.S. Capitol and continued with shouting matches and physical altercations over mask mandates at our children’s public schools. We concluded 2021—a record-setting year for warming temperatures across the globe – with the Glasgow Conference and its fragile agreements to reduce the very emissions that have led us to the brink of planet-wide catastrophe.

In the face of such daunting circumstances, what can we do? Many of us feel small, thinking about the enormous challenges facing our state, our country, our planet. At the Center this past year we found solace in the face of so much uncertainty by working hard to provide continuity to the programs and projects that fulfill our mission: “to bridge academia and government in the service of strengthening California’s democracy.” Through our Capital Fellows Program, we selected 64 outstanding individuals to work for a year at the highest levels of state government, thereby helping to develop the next generation of public sector leaders. With our LegiSchool program, we educated dozens of high school students about California state government and the policy issues it grapples with. And through our public programs and research initiatives, we worked to develop public discourse and research-based solutions focused on the most difficult problems vexing the state.

Government, research, and civil discourse all lie at the heart of any solution to the problems that lie ahead. In the grand scheme of things, the Center plays a small part in supporting all three of these important components of public policy-making, but in the coming year, we will play this small role with heart and enthusiasm, looking ahead with confidence in this state’s democratic institutions and what might come from politics and the art of the possible.
Mission Statement

The Center for California Studies is based at Sacramento State – the “Capital Campus” of the California State University. Being located in California’s capital strategically positions the Center to be the University’s link to the three branches of California’s government, other universities, think tanks, and outside partnerships involved with public service in California. This, paired with our extensive research, academic programming, and position as part of the country’s largest public university system, makes us uniquely equipped to fulfill our mission and accomplish our goals.

To accomplish its mission, the Center has identified these goals:

- To assist California’s public officials and policymakers in addressing the state’s challenges through policy research and productive dialogue.
- To foster in California’s future leaders a dedication to public service and a commitment to the values of representative democracy, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for an effective and ethical public career.
- To promote civic literacy among Californians, inspiring greater understanding of our state, government, people, and history.
CALIFORNIA STUDIES
STATEMENT

In service of strengthening California’s democracy.

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SIGNIFICANT CENTER ACTIVITIES IN 2021 INCLUDED:

Serving as a Bridge Between Academia and Policy-Makers

- Gates grant – 2021 was the second year of implementing our grant of a little less than $500,000 from the Gates Foundation. To date, we have completed one of two program evaluations, started work on a survey of public attitudes towards racial equity solutions and nearly completed a multi-year training program for young educational leaders. We recently received a one-year extension on our grant, which will allow us to fulfill the grant’s objectives and utilize the grant in full.

- CJPP – Since finding a new home at Sac State, the journal continues to be published, with the help of Ted Lascher, Professor Emeritus of Public Policy and Administration, who is acting as Managing Editor.

- CalSPEAKS – Since embarking on a 3-year agreements with the Institute for Social Research to fund an annual statewide public opinion poll, we have completed a survey of public attitudes towards public transportation and how they were affected by COVID-19.

- Envisioning California Speaker Series – In September, we sponsored a presentation on social media and adolescent mental health by Jean Twenge, professor of psychology at San Diego State.

- Faculty Research Fellows Program – One project is currently underway, with the help of faculty from Sac State’s Department of Environmental Studies: a report on policy options to reduce the proliferation of single-use disposable products. We anticipated completion of this project next year.

Capital Fellows Programs and LegiSchool

- In our four Fellows programs, we successfully completed an all-virtual selection process, for the second year in a row. Our 64 Fellows weathered changes in COVID safety guidelines, with some enjoying the opportunity to work in person for part of the year. The directors of the four Fellows programs successfully supported our Fellows in navigating different sets of vaccination requirements and safety protocols.

- LegiSchool continued its second year of all-virtual programming, including town halls, contests, and the new summer civics institute for high school juniors and seniors.

Other Internship and Training Programs

- EPFP – The Education Policy Fellows Program, which the Center jointly runs with Sac State’s EdInsights Center, was put on hold for a year, due to leadership changes at EdInsights. The Center has been involved in planning for next year’s EPFP program and in supporting programming for EPFP alumni.

- Chicano/Latino Youth Leadership Program – As we do every year, we supported the educational component of this Capitol internship program for Latinx undergraduate students.

- LSMI – With the encouragement of our partners at NCSL and USC, we returned to an in-person format for this popular program, and had a record number of participants: 56 participants from 28 states and 1 territory.
Founded in 1982 and located at Sacramento State, the capital campus of the California State University (CSU), the Center possesses a unique trust: to bring the resources of the state’s largest university system to the service of public discourse, civic education, and state government.
I used to think government work was extremely rigid and straightforward, but now I’ve seen firsthand how complex state matters can be. There is no one right answer, and that is why it’s so important that Californians take the many opportunities to voice their opinions to impact legislation.
The Jesse Marvin Unruh
Assembly Fellowship Program

Founded in 1957 by then-Speaker Jesse M. Unruh, the Assembly Fellowship Program is the oldest of the four Capital Fellows Programs and marked its 64th anniversary in 2021. The program is a part of the Assembly’s earliest efforts to professionalize legislative staff. Since the 1980s, the program has been a partnership between the California State Assembly, the Center for California Studies, and Sacramento State.

The goal of the Assembly Fellowship Program is to provide an opportunity for aspiring public servants to directly participate in the legislative process.

2020 was significantly impacted by COVID-19 and remote work. The program responded to the unprecedented challenges with increased support for the 2020-21 Fellows to transition to hybrid remote and in-person work. A significant amount of new programming was created to supplement the Fellows’ experience. The program also collaborated closely with Assembly leadership to seamlessly transition the 2021 fellowship to a hybrid model. Despite the challenges the year brought, the vast majority of the 2020-21 Fellows sought and obtained post-fellowship employment within the legislature and Capitol community upon completion of the program.

The program also successfully held virtual interviews for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 selection process which yielded the selection of a high caliber and diverse class of Fellows.

The 2021-22 class began their fellowship on October 11, 2021. The Fellows participated in an intensive seven-week-long virtual orientation in preparation for their office placements. Orientation continued to focus on the themes of process, policy, politics, and placement with trainings led by key legislative staff, many of whom are Assembly Fellowship alumni. Activities included legislative and budget process trainings, placement preparation, professional development, and team building. Office placement interviews were conducted in-person as the Assembly resumes its work in-person.

Fellows continued to be in high demand with over 40 Assembly offices requesting Fellows.

Visit us at: https://www.csus.edu/center/center-california-studies/capital-fellows.html
Twitter: @asmfellows
The California Senate Fellows Program

Created in 1973, the California Senate Fellows Program (CSF) is the second oldest of the four Capital Fellows Programs. The Secretary of the Senate, Erika Contreras - a former Fellow herself - contributes to the CSF program as the principal Senate partner. The 11-month Fellowship program provides experiential learning, professional and career development and mentorship. This is in addition to an intensive academic component and policy briefings from subject matter experts who are dedicated to the mission of the Center—building legislative staff capacity and strengthening California’s democratic governance structure. Our Senate partners consider the Fellows program an integral part of its staff succession plan.

Civic education is a key goal of the Center for California Studies—it is a testament to the fulfillment of that objective that the successful planning, selection, and preparation of Senate Fellows for legislative service.

The 2020-21 California Senate Fellows completed their academic seminar in May of 2021, researching and writing a 40-page formal policy paper. This capstone project represented an in-depth and scholarly analysis of an issue selected by Fellows, with an emphasis on future policy options, and detailing key policy recommendations. The assigned policy analysis allowed Fellows to emphasize “live” rather than library research. Fellows sources of information were individuals and offices currently working on legislation and issues related to the academic research topic. Interviewing the important “participants” in the process is an especially appropriate technique that is developed through the capstone project.

Fellows spent the remainder of their Fellowship applying what they learned. With the impact of Coronavirus, Senate Fellows experienced changes in the legislative calendar, Senate safety protocols, including daily COVID-19 testing, reduced staffing in the Capitol, remote and in-person program participation. The California Legislature established continuity of government which allowed Fellows to work remotely and on-site under specified safety protocols. Fellows were able to manage legislation, staff members in their respective committees, conduct research, develop bill and budget analyses, manage stakeholder efforts, and provide constituent services in addition to a variety of other essential tasks. The 2020-21 CSF program ended on September 15, 2021, and the class was successful in obtaining post-Fellowship career employment. Nine of the eighteen Senate Fellows remained in staff positions within the Legislature. Six stayed in public service by taking staff analyst or aide positions in the Department of Finance, the Community College League of California, a Congressional office, and local government service. One Fellow is pursuing a career as an issue advocate in the nonprofit sector. And two Fellows are attending graduate school.

The 2021-22 CSF selection panel played a crucial role in identifying the most competitive appointments to the program’s eighteen positions. The selection panel reviewed two-hundred and ninety-five applications and facilitated 85 virtual interviews. The final cohort of 18 Fellows represents 6 percent of all applicants. The CSF selection panel was comprised of one representative of the Center for CA Studies at Sac State, one academic representative of the Sac State Political Science Department, two Republican Senate staff members, and five Democratic Senate staff members. The 2021-22 class of Senate Fellows arrived on October 11. After a seven-week orientation focused on experiential learning, process, policy, and custom and practice in the CA Senate, Fellows began their assignments in Senate offices on December 6.

Visit us at: https://www.csus.edu/center:center-california-studies/capital-Fellows.html
The Judicial Fellowship Program

In 1997, the Center for California Studies collaborated with the Judicial Council of California to create a unique program in the third branch of state government. At a time in history when the state court faced unprecedented changes in governance and funding, the California State University system identified its niche in the unique public management arena of court policy and administration.

Judicial Fellows experience the innovations, challenges, and complexities of the largest single court system in the world.

Serving as professional staff, Judicial Fellows assist in policy-making and innovative programs that impact the courts and the goals of providing justice through equal access and fairness across the state and in local communities.

The only program to offer statewide placement opportunities, the Judicial Fellowship Program selects 10 Fellows each year. Placement locations in 2021 included the counties of Alameda, Butte, Los Angeles, Placer, Sacramento (21-22), San Bernardino, and San Mateo, as well as the Judicial Council Office of Governmental Affairs, and Judicial Council Criminal Justice Services division. In a creative development in 2021, Fellows placed in Butte worked remotely with the small rural county of Glenn on projects serving Superior Court as well. Additionally, a new court placement was added, the Nevada County Superior Court (21-22).

In 2021, the class of 20-21 completed their respective year-long Fellowship Projects. Projects included the development of a supervisor/leadership training modules and the development of online resources for self-represented litigants in unlawful detainer cases.

In 2021 nearly all Judicial Fellows served on site at their placement in addition to some remote work. They are engaged and contribute greatly to the judicial branch during the pandemic.

Virtual Speaker Series
The monthly Speaker Series focuses on an aspect of court administration or professional development. Fellows speak with different court administrators and learn more about career paths, changes in the judicial branch, technology updates, and of course the impact of COVID-19 on many different parts of the judicial branch operations.

Hybrid Orientation and Field Seminars
In spring of 2021, Judicial Fellows continued with virtual field and academic seminars. The class of 2020-21 ended in August and in September we welcomed the incoming Judicial Fellows in person for two of the four Orientation days. Orientation covered many introductory topics and team building opportunities. Virtual field seminars have continued for the class of 21-22 and have received a positive response from the Fellows.

Virtual Interviews
All candidates for the Judicial Fellowship Program class of 21-22 interviewed via Zoom in April and May 2021.

Keep up to date on the Judicial Fellows!
Judicial Blog: https://cajudicial.wordpress.com/
Twitter: @cajudicial Instagram: @cajudicial
The Executive Fellowship Program

The Executive Fellowship Program was created in 1985 through the joint efforts of then-Sacramento State President Don Gerth and then-Governor George Deukmejian. It was the third of the now four Fellowship programs composing the Capital Fellows Programs. The Executive Fellowship Program started with ten Fellows in October of 1986. The program expanded to fifteen Fellows in 1994 and eighteen in 1997. The Executive Fellowship Program continues to accelerate the personal leadership growth of public sector professionals towards preserving and protecting our democracy. Executive Fellows are skilled, ethical, and purposeful leaders who are committed to making a difference in the world, and who invest their career in protecting and securing opportunities for all communities to thrive.

The 2020-2021 Executive Fellows will be remembered as the most unique of Fellows classes, both for the context of their service and how they delivered in the most trying of years. This amazing group served their placements completely on-line/remote due to the Covid-19 pandemic and were firmly involved in the crisis management operations of all their placements. These placements included the Department of Health Care Services, California Volunteers, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, the California Student Aid Commission, and the High-Speed Rail Authority. New placement offices included the California Conservation Corps, the Department of Finance, the International Relations Unit at the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the Governor’s Press Office. This cohort received the highest levels of consistent praise and gratitude from senior leaders in these offices for their service to the state through the pandemic and are to be commended for their term of service under the most challenging and limiting of conditions. All members of the 2020-21 class were able to secure post Fellowship employment, many of whom remained in staff and executive positions in California government.

Once again due to the Covid-19 pandemic our newest cohort, the 2021-2022 Executive Fellows, completed their orientation and began their placements all virtually (on-line) in mid-November. They have already begun integrating into the operations of their placements and assuming roles within their respective leadership offices and teams. Our newest class of Fellows is as talented and committed as any in years past and are well poised to continue our program tradition of selfless, creative, and diligent service. We are confident in the success of this class in the face of the unknown challenges of the program year ahead.

Fellows work full-time in high levels of the executive branch and meet weekly for graduate seminars. It is a wonderful opportunity for Fellows to gain insight and experience in state government.

Visit us at: https://www.csus.edu/center-center-california-studies/capital-fellows.html
Founded in 1994, the LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between Sacramento State and the California State Legislature. LegiSchool encourages high school students to be civically engaged in their district and beyond. Our diverse programming throughout the year gives students the opportunity to talk about important state issues and engaged in current events.

LegiSchool started 2021 with the first virtual Legislative Summit on Zoom. The Legislative Summit featured 15 essay contest winners from LegiSchool’s essay contest on California’s 2020 policies. The students were joined by Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell, Senator Monique Limón, and Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin. All winners shared powerful thoughts and ideas about a wide-array of issues such as COVID-19, homelessness, wildfires, education, immigration, agriculture, and much more.

Cybersecurity in the Digital Age, held in February, was the first Virtual Town Hall of 2021. High school students from the Sacramento and LA area gathered virtually to discuss the security of our private information, examine the increase of data brokers, and explain how to protect ourselves from hackers. Rachel Lu, alumni from Florin High School, and Lamont Dobbins, student at Dr. Richard A. Vladovic Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy, moderated this event. Both students participated in the 2020 LegiSchool Civics Institute and did extensive policy research on this topic.

In April, LegiSchool hosted the second Virtual Town Hall of the year: California Financial Aid Reform. Three of the 2020 LegiSchool Civics Institute Alumni moderated this event: Jackelyn Diaz-Perez and Jeana Lee from UC Berkeley, and Jake Robb from Bentley High School. Panelists included Marlene Garcia, the Executive Director of the California Student Aid Commission, who shared a lot of insight on students’ total college expenses and the efforts of CSAC to assist students with financial need.

In Summer 2021, LegiSchool continued the virtual programming and hosted the Virtual Civics Institute for the second year in a row, an online virtual internship experience. For four weeks, 16 students experienced all three branches of government and heard from over 18 guest speakers, collaborated on their Town Hall Final Projects, conducted policy research, and participated in professional workshops.

In October 2021, LegiSchool hosted the third Virtual Town Hall Event, Housing the Unhoused, moderated by Civics Institute Alumni, Calvin Cho from Beckman High School. The event had an audience of high school students and teachers, Sac State students and professors, and Capitol Staff members. This important conversation focused on homeless youth, informed college students about housing resources, and touched on key housing bills passing through the legislature.

To find out more about these opportunities and all of LegiSchool’s civic education pursuits, please visit our website: https://www.csus.edu/legischool
Capital Fellows 2021 Outreach

Outreach in 2021 included recruitment of the 2021-22 and 2022-23 classes of Capital Fellows. Methods for reaching applicants include alumni and staff Zoom virtual career fairs, Handshake, and instructional videos. We continued our outreach efforts via emailing outreach materials, online advertising, social media including blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram posts.

1005 applications were received in February 2021 for the 2021-22 class of Capital Fellows Programs. 26% of these applicants received their undergraduate degree from the CSU, 44% from the UC, 12% from private California universities, and 18% from out-of-state universities; 56% of applicants were female 41% male 2% Mx. and 1% not stated. Over the last ten years, the number of applications for the Capital Fellows Programs has ranged from 892 to 1,468 with an average of 1,246 applications. Outreach in 2021 culminated in the selection of a diverse 2021-22 class of fellows. Based on application surveys, this class consisted of 62% Persons of Color, more specifically, the class was 15% Asian/Pacific Islander, 13% Bi/Multi Racial, 9% Black/African American, 23% Latino/Hispanic, 34% Caucasian, 2% Native American and 4% Not Specified.

We received applications from applicants with bachelor’s degrees from 53 different California universities and 55 out-of-state schools. Selected Fellows received degrees from 30 different campuses and represent 27 different majors. Surveys indicated that applicants heard about the Capital Fellows Programs from several sources; most applicants listing more than one source of information. 30% of applicants heard about the programs from professors or academic staff; 18% from career centers or career fairs; 25% from former or current Fellows; 11% from the internet or online publications; and 16% from other means. Review of the 2022-23 applications will begin in February of 2022.

### Post-Fellowship Decisions, 2020–21 Capital Fellows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Stayed With Placement or With Same Branch</th>
<th>Other State, Federal or Local Government Service</th>
<th>Graduate or Law School</th>
<th>Private Sector (includes legislative advocacy related work)</th>
<th>Non-Profit Sector</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly</td>
<td>10 (56%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>12 (67%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>3 (30%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (50%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34 (50%)</td>
<td>9 (38%)</td>
<td>11 (17%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (6%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Capital Fellows Applications Received
Fellowship Years 2010-11 to 2021-22

Capital Fellows Applications Received by Program
Fellowship Year 2021-22

Capital Fellows Applicants Undergrad School Type
Fellowship Year 2021-22

- CSU 26%
- UC 44%
- California Private 12%
- Out of State 18%

Capital Fellows Applicants Ethnicity
Fellowship Year 2021-22

- Caucasian 34%
- Latino/Hispanic 23%
- Bi/Multi Racial 13%
- Black/African American 9%
- Asian/Pacific Islander 15%
- Native American 2%
- No Response 4%

Capital Fellows Undergrad School Type, 2021-22 Class

- CSU 27%
- UC 55%
- California Private 9%
- Out of State 9%

Capital Fellows Ethnicity, 2021-22 Class

- Caucasian 27%
- Latino/Hispanic 28%
- Asian/Pacific Islander 15%
- Black/African American 10%
- Bi/Multi Racial 9%
- No Response 9%
Last year, we worked with faculty from Sac State's Departments of Political Science and Public Policy and Administration to make Sac State the new home of the California Journal of Politics and Policy. This peer-reviewed academic journal was published for many years by UC Berkeley’s Institute of Governmental Studies and offered a place for faculty to publish research specific to the politics and policy of this state. This summer the journal published its inaugural issue at Sac State, edited by Ted Lascher and Wesley Hussey of Sac State’s Departments of Public Policy and Administration and Political Science, respectively. This issue covered a variety of topics, with a special focus on the government’s response to COVID-19. Articles included:

• A rigorous study of the effects of the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act, by Natalie Schwehr and Giovanni Alarcon of the University of Minnesota. The study compared data from California with that of states that did not expand Medicaid, looking at differences in healthcare coverage, access, self-reported health status, and affordability. It found that California’s expansion led to significant gains in health outcomes for the low-income Californians it was intended to help, although some disparities between outcomes for White low-income Californians and non-White Californians persisted.

• A study of the effectiveness of efforts to reassure census respondents about the confidentiality of their responses. The Trump Administration’s attempts to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census raised concerns that this would suppress responses among families with mixed immigration status. Researchers Stephanie DeMora and Melissa Michelson of UCRiverside and Menlo College analyzed data collected in 2018 as part of a field study. They found that when organizations reassured respondents that their information would remain confidential, this had little effect on participation.

• A look at California’s response to the pandemic in juvenile detention facilities. Sue Burrell from the Pacific Juvenile Defender Center and Shannon Wilber from the National Center for Lesbian Rights look at the state and local response, identify missteps and make recommendations for policy and governance changes.

• Three short commentary pieces, one on the effects of the pandemic on political campaigns, a second detailing how Butte County Superior Court responded to COVID restrictions, and third piece on lobbying during a pandemic.

The current plan for CJPP is to publish up to two editions of the journal a year. The upcoming edition will focus on budget issues in Western states.

To read any issue of CJPP, visit California Journal of Politics and Policy (escholarship.org). To submit an article to be considered for publication, visit the Center for California’s website: csus.edu/calst
Two years ago, the Center received a two-year grant of approximately $450,000 to do the following: 1) evaluate the Center’s programs and overall strategy, 2) fund applied research and programming on economic equity, and 3) revive a leadership training program for emerging education leaders. Shortly after the Center received the grant, the COVID-19 pandemic was upon us. The effects of COVID-19 negatively impacted our ability to spend the grant funds as we originally planned. As of the writing of this report, the Center had spent approximately half of its grant. The Gates Foundation recently gave us a no-cost, one-year extension on our grant, which will allow us to fully spend the funds by the end of 2022. The following is an update on how we have spent the funds to date, and how we plan to spend the remaining portion.

• Capacity-building/ program evaluation – Our grant included funds for capacity-building activities, such as evaluations of our long-standing programs and strategic planning. One evaluation has already been completed -- that of the Center’s Faculty Research Fellows Program. The evaluation was conducted by Sac State’s Institute for Social Research. A second evaluation, of the LegiSchool program, is currently underway by Sac State’s Capital Education Institute within the School of Education. In 2022 we intend to spend the remaining funds from this portion on an outside look at the Center’s external communications.

• Applied research and programming on economic inequality – The Gates grant included funds to support applied research and informational events on the topic of economic inequality in California. At Gates’ invitation, we joined an informal consortia of California researchers, focused on the problem of educational equity. The Center’s grant will support a CalSPEAKs survey on Californians’ attitudes toward racial equity and potential solutions, featuring questions posed by members of the consortia and faculty from Sac State’s Department of Political Science. This work is currently underway, and we anticipate the survey’s completion in the spring of 2022. Other work planned with this portion of the grant includes several white papers on topics suggested by policy makers, with anticipated completion in the fall of 2022.

• Leadership training for emerging education leaders – The final portion of our grant included funds to resurrect the Gus Chavez Educational Leadership Institute. This program brings together emerging education leaders from all over California for intensive leadership and networking sessions led by experienced leaders with track records in addressing equity challenges.
In 2021, the Timothy A. Hodson Capital Fellows Assistance Fund honored its 10th anniversary. Dedicated to the mission of supporting Capital Fellows with needs-based awards, $9,000 in funding was granted to 15 incoming 2021-22 Capital Fellows. These funds provide a critical financial bridge needed to start the fellowship, covering costs ranging from housing deposits to professional wardrobes. Center friends, colleagues and the Hodson family continued to help sustain the Fund with their generous support.

Since the establishment of the Hodson Fund, we have aided 144 Fellows from ten consecutive cohorts. These inspiring future leaders represent the California promise and dreams that Tim Hodson often wrote and spoke about and would be so proud to see today.

Last year, we entered into an agreement with Sac State’s Institute for Social Research to sponsor an annual survey through CalSPEAKs, a California-specific tool designed to gauge public opinions on policy topics.

This year, we worked with policy makers in the California State Assembly to examine public attitudes towards public transportation and other alternatives to private cars, and how these attitudes were affected by COVID-19 restrictions and safety requirements. We plan to present these findings in a public event, planned for early 2022.

In September, we welcomed Dr. Jean Twenge, a renowned professor of psychology from San Diego State, for a webinar presentation on the association between social media use and behavioral trends among adolescents. Dr. Twenge presented her research findings on increasing rates of depression among adolescents, based on a dataset of 11 million young people. Her explosive findings, linking adolescent use of social media with these alarming behavioral trends coincided with Congressional hearings on Facebook’s knowledge of the harm their product causes to teens. Dr. Twenge concluded her presentation with policy recommendations to improve regulation of social media companies. For more information about Dr. Twenge and her work, see Home - Dr. Jean Twenge. Dr. Twenge is a frequent contributor to the Atlantic, the New York Times and other media outlets.

Last year, for the first time, we and our partners at USC had to convert this normally-in-person program to a virtual format. Converting an intensive eight-day, in-person program to a virtual format was no easy task, but interest in the program remained high, and we had 45 staff from 22 states participate in the 2020 on-line version of LSMI.

Despite the success of last year’s virtual program, the popularity of the in-person version of LSMI remains very popular. So, when NCSL announced in the spring of 2021, that LSMI would return to an in-person format, the response among legislative staff was enthusiastic. We received a record number of applicants to the program – so many applications that we had to think creatively about how to maintain the quality of the program while increasing the number of participants. We ultimately had 63 staff from 28 states and 1 territory join our in-person LSMI program in August, a record number. We adopted COVID-19 safety protocols (mask-wearing, social distancing, and encouraging vaccinations) throughout the program, and participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the overall return of LSMI to the intensive in-person format it is known for.
In offering its various programs, the Center has greatly benefited from productive collaborations with many partners outside California State University, Sacramento. Thank you to all our partners, including but not limited to, the following:

- Office of the Governor
- California State Assembly
- California State Senate
- Judicial Council of California
- Center for Southern California Studies
- California State Archives
- California Secretary of State
- Capital Public Radio
- California Center for Civic Participation
- California Cultural and Historical Endowment
- Institute for Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley
- Institute for Local Government
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- Pat Brown Institute, California State University, Los Angeles
- UC Berkeley Public Policy Press
- University of Southern California, Sol Price School of Public Policy
- University of California Center, Sacramento