



College of SSIS Newsletter

Spring 2016

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The College of
Social Sciences &
Interdisciplinary
Studies

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Designed by: Heather Mummaw

Dear Friends of the College of SSIS,

Happy New Year from all of us in the Dean's office! May 2016 bring you and your loved ones much good health, happiness, and success. Here in the Dean's office, we are gearing up for a very busy and exciting year ahead. Here is an update on all that's going on:

1. The Capital School of Public Affairs project, which will be the university's presence downtown, is moving along very nicely and we are planning for an August, 2016 launch. The downtown school task force, working with me, completed a business plan for the Capital School and submitted it to President Nelsen last month. We are zeroing in on choosing a location, considering space plans, and other arrangements. President Nelsen has strongly endorsed this project and it has generated quite a bit of interest downtown. I look forward to sharing more news with you soon;

2. This semester, the College will co-host three significant conferences in Sacramento – the CSU Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences on March 3-4, the North American conference of the Chinese Economists Society (CES) on April 2-3, and a conference focusing on climate change, "Water and Fire: Impacts of Climate Change," in collaboration with the Institute on Science for Global Policy, on April 10-11. The conference of deans is being organized in collaboration with the College of Arts & Letters and while the climate change conference is a university-wide effort, our College is the lead organizer, with Dr. Michelle Stevens (Department of Environmental Studies) chairing the conference organizing committee. These will be three excellent conferences;

3. We are planning another Al Qazzaz Dean's Lecture this semester. The inaugural lecture, given by Dr. Peter Gleick from the Pacific Institute and on the topic of climate change, was a smashing success. Currently, a committee is working on the selection of a speaker who will give the Al Qazzaz lecture later this Spring;

4. I am excited to report that we have plans to form an interdisciplinary College center that provides a platform of opportunities for faculty, students, staff, and community members to engage in research, teaching, and learning about important social issues that have confronted and divided this nation, e.g. ethnicity, immigration, inequality, and race. Last semester, I gathered together a group of over 20 faculty members to discuss this particular goal of our



Örn Bodvarsson, Dean

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Dean's Message cont'd

strategic plan and this semester we will put together a planning task force and retain a consultant to help us set up the center. I am excited about what this center will be able to do for our students, faculty, and overall university community;

5. We are working hard to build up enrollments in our graduate programs and to expand our global engagement work. Two task forces – a graduate coordinator task force and a global engagement task force – have been formed to work with me to find ways to meet our goals to have the share of graduate students in SSIS increase to 10% by 2020 and for 10% of all SSIS students to have some sort of international experience by 2020;

6. We are doing five tenure-track searches in the College this year – 3 in the Department of Sociology,

1 in the Department of Family & Consumer Sciences and 1 in the Department of Environmental Studies. Two of the 3 positions in Sociology have been filled and the other three searches are in various stages of completion. We look very forward to welcoming all 5 new faculty members to campus in August.

So, we have a lot to do and I look forward to updating you on these and other projects in the next Newsletter. It's always a pleasure to hear from alumni, friends, and retired faculty. Please send us your news. I want to thank those of you who have generously supported the college in the past. As we continue to go forward with our projects, I am grateful for any form of support for the college. Thank you and here's to a great 2016!



Örn Bodvarsson

Learn about EdInsights!



EdInsights is a research and policy center devoted to student success and the public benefits of education. Its mission is to inform and improve policymaking and practice for K-12 education, community colleges and public universities. This is done through applied research, capacity building and program evaluation. Examples of areas of work include:

Postsecondary student success. EdInsights is researching policies and practices that enable student transfer between California's community colleges and California State Universities, and on connections between state higher education policy development and regional/local implementation. This work is funded by the College Futures Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, respectively.

College and career readiness. EdInsights is studying implementation of the Common Core State Standards and professional learning opportunities for high school educators. This work is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation through the California Education Policy Fund.

Network development. EdInsights is partnering with the Career Ladders Project to support regional education partnerships that are working to provide curricular pathways and improve student access to, and progression within, postsecondary education in California. This work is funded by The James Irvine Foundation. In addition, EdInsights is collaborating with partners from across the California State University System to develop a network of faculty, staff and administrators who "lead from the middle" and focus collectively on issues related to student success. This work is funded by The Kresge Foundation.

Career and technical education/pathways development. EdInsights is undertaking a suite of evaluation projects, ranging from a large-scale evaluation of health sciences pathways development in the California Community Colleges (funded by a federal TAACCCT grant) to smaller campus-level efforts at Sacramento State. It is also tasked with evaluating the state's Economic and Workforce Development program.

Institutional change. In 2016, EdInsights will start a multi-year project to evaluate professional development opportunities supported by the California Community College system's Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative.

California Speaks

California Speaks is a unique, ongoing collection and investigation of citizens' voices in California, focusing on the distinctive economic, social, political, and environmental issues that confront our state.

The centerpiece of California Speaks is the large and demographically representative CALSPEAKS Survey Panel, which is recruited using probability-based sampling methods as well as quota-based techniques (thereby enabling methodological comparisons).

The unique CALSPEAKS approach enables researchers to quickly capture what Californians think with precision and confidence -- at lower cost than any other survey or focus group in the state.

Although similar online survey panels exist at the national level (e.g. NORC, RAND, Gallup, and Pew), the CALSPEAKS Panel is the only one of its kind in that it listens exclusively to the voices of Californians, using probability-based methods.

The interdisciplinary CALSPEAKS research team aligns unmatched scientific rigor with a commitment to making public policy in our more state more responsive to the public.

Whether seeking a quick snapshot of citizens' views regarding pressing issues of the day, monitoring changes in opinion over time, conducting experiments to pinpoint cause-and-effect, or facilitating democratic deliberation in contemporary contexts, the nonpartisan and nonprofit CALSPEAKS offers unparalleled opportunities to hear Californians' voices . . . and to really understand them.

SERVICES

Custom On-line/Mobile Device Surveys using the CALSPEAKS citizen panel (augmented by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing or mail, as necessary for panelists who lack internet access)

- Election Polling
- Omnibus Social and Public Health Surveys (see below)
- Custom Surveys/Interviews of Policymakers and Other Public Officials

- Online Deliberative Focus Groups
- Survey Design Consulting
- Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of Survey/Focus Group Data
- Data Management/Archiving
- Statistical Consulting
- Full Reports and Presentations

OMNIBUS SURVEYS

The CALSPEAKS Omnibus Social Survey (COSS) and the CALSPEAKS Omnibus Public Health Survey (COPHS) are annual data collections that facilitate collaborative partnerships among researchers and policymakers. Each large survey includes questions (gathered through a competitive process) from social scientists, epidemiologists, and public policy professionals working in social or health policy fields (e.g. social services, health care, education, criminal justice, the environment, or democratic functioning). Unlike pricing for custom surveys, pricing for participation in these omnibus surveys is per survey question, enabling quality data collection at very low rates.

THE CALSPEAKS RESEARCH TEAM

David C. Barker, Ph.D. is the Director of the Institute for Social Research and Professor of Government.

Kimberly Nalder, Ph.D. is a Professor of Government and the founding director of the Project for an Informed Electorate.

Edward (Ted) L. Lascher, Jr., Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Public Policy and Administration.

Joshua J. Dyck, Ph.D. is Visiting Scholar at the Center for California Studies.

Ernest L. Cowles, Ph.D. is currently a Senior Fellow with the Institute for Social Research and Emeritus Professor of Sociology.

Julia Tomassilli, Ph.D. is the Director of Public Health Survey Research Program.

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Psi Chi Wins Model Chapter Award

In July 2015, Sac State's chapter of Psi Chi (International Honor Society in Psychology) was honored with the Psi Chi Model Chapter Award for 2014-2015. This award is very competitive, only being awarded to 40 chapters each year out of over 1100 chapters across the globe.

The application process involved the chapter describing some of their major events through the year, such as the Opportunity Fair and the Valentine's Card Drive for Children's Hospital, how they recruit members, how often they meet, and many other ways that they fulfill their role as an honor society. Several students spearheaded the efforts to ensure they were in compliance for the award and to put together the application: Sydney Ruiz, Magali Hernandez-Mejia,

Tina Smith, Isabella Serrato, and Jennifer Blair. Dr. Casey Knifsend, Associate Professor in Psychology and Chapter Advisor said that winning this award, "validates the work that our chapter does in terms of promoting opportunities related to Psychology through research, special topic workshops, and community service that benefits the department, Sacramento State, and the broader Sacramento community."



PPA Thesis Showcase

PPA held its 2015 "Thesis Showcase" at the State Capitol on November 4.

Participants included four recent graduates of the master's program, all of who had conducted original research with major public policy implications. The standing room only audience included legislative staff members, state agency employees, faculty, students, and many others.

Presentations covered a diverse array of topics and drew on a range of research methodologies. Yovana Gognic discussed her findings about how physical education classes affect youth exercise, drawing from extensive statistical analysis of California Health Interview survey data. Sean Johnson provided an analysis of why housing is so often unaffordable in the Sacramento region and offered provocative recommendations for addressing the problem. Terra Thorne examined

factors that encouraged young people in foster to enroll in college, drawing from an exploratory survey of 33 foster youth. Hannah Blodgett analyzed factors that determine receipt of CalWorks benefits among African

Americans, drawing on both statistical analysis and input from policy experts.

The PPA program requires every master's student to develop a thesis, and focuses much attention on guiding students through this process. Faculty members believe that the thesis requirement greatly enhances students' ability to conduct and assess major research projects, providing them with a competitive edge in the public policy and administrative arenas. Completed PPA theses are posted on-line at <http://www.csus.edu/ppa/thesis-project/bank/index.html>. Several students have extracted material from theses for publication in academic journals and other venues, such as



newspaper op-eds.

For more information about the Showcase and PPA theses contact Dr. Ted Lascher at tedl@csus.edu.

College of SSIS Faculty Staff Peer Mentoring (FSMP) Program

by Misha Haghighat

Our College is home to several Peer Mentoring efforts, which are aimed towards providing students with the support and resources to be successful in their academic endeavors. Currently, the following Departments provide Peer Mentoring: Anthropology, Environmental Studies, Family and Consumer Sciences, Gerontology, Government, Psychology, Sociology, and Women's Studies. As a collective whole, peer mentors provide information and resources including but not limited to: career development and acquisition of academic skills. Thus, while peer-mentoring efforts differ by department, we have universal goals and services.

Within the College, there are two Peer Mentoring Programs that are unique in terms of the types of the services they provide: Odyssey Mentoring Program (Government) and Prospects Peer Mentoring and Advising (Psychology).

Prospects Peer Mentoring and Advising (Prospects):

Students are able to meet with a mentor on a weekly basis, and choose topics from a pre-set list of resources (known as the custom curriculum). For example, students who have their sights on graduate school may elect to learn about: letters of recommendation, personal statements, and opportunities for professional advancement. Thus, students are able to choose topics that are aligned with their long-term career endeavors.

Odyssey Mentor Program (Odyssey): Peer-mentor dyads create long-term goals, and strive to



Fall 2015 Prospects Peer Mentoring and Advising Program Cohort

meet said goals throughout the semester. In addition,

Odyssey provides students with professional networking opportunities such as the Odyssey Mixer, which allows students the privilege to interact with Government faculty and alumni. Therefore, students are able to receive mentoring on both an individualized and Department-wide level.

As peer mentors, we are invested in the well being of our students. Our motto as peer mentors is that "SSIS means success", we want our students to excel in their goals, and dream big.

"Peer mentoring to me is an opportunity to directly give back to the community"- Windy Ly (Government)

"I love my job because I feel like I have the opportunity to play a key role in making sure people know they are loved and taken care of here at Sacramento State."- Alex Pattenaude (Sociology)

"To me peer mentoring means helping people"- Kaeliana Rabago (Women's Studies)



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Danielle Joesten Martin, Ph.D. is and Assistant Professor of Government.

Cheryl Boudreau, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Davis.

Scott Mackenzie, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Davis.

Student Researchers, at both graduate and undergraduate levels, also contribute significantly to the CALSPEAKS research team in every respect, from panel recruitment and management to questionnaire construction and data analysis.

For CALSPEAKS methodological details, contact David Barker at david.barker@csus.edu.

Support SSIS by making a gift!
Please contact Jaqueline Ervin,
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The College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies wants to hear from you! If you would like to receive more information or you wish to contribute to a story or news item, contact Heather Mummaw at 916-278-6504 or mummawh@csus.edu

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