

AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY

*Enhancing student
success through
philanthropy*



**STUDENT
SUCCESS**
INITIATIVE

UC SANTA CRUZ

**OUR VOICES ARE
UNITED IN THE
CALL FOR EQUITY,
SOCIAL JUSTICE,
AND PROMISE
FOR THE FUTURE.
THERE'S NO GREATER
RESPONSE THAN
HIGHER EDUCATION.**

Chancellor Cynthia K. Larive

UC SANTA CRUZ: WHERE REAL CHANGE STARTS

Access to higher education is the single most important influence on a person's socioeconomic mobility. At the University of California, Santa Cruz, we want every undergraduate student to have equal access to the full range of university experiences. We want our graduate students to have the freedom and resources they need to develop into the scholars and industry leaders they will become. We seek to amplify opportunities for all of our students—to be a springboard that helps launch them as critical thinkers, innovators, and leaders.

UC Santa Cruz is a global research university—and our idyllic location along the shores of Monterey Bay and within the surrounding redwood forests inspires the transformative nature of our educational and research missions. We are a community of scientists and makers, artists and creators, justice seekers and problem solvers. Our voices move ideas into action, and action into transformative change.

Undergraduates: Pushing Boundaries

We are a campus where the entire community embraces the life-changing nature of higher education. Our dedicated faculty and staff are at the heart of student success—through the world-class teaching and research, experiential learning opportunities, and support they provide to students. Our unique college system allows UC Santa Cruz to blend the resources of a large, world-renowned research university with the intimacy of a small liberal arts college.

Our campus is home to a diverse student body of gifted scholars. Nearly half of our

undergraduates are from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education, including Latinx, Black, Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander students. About a third are the first in their families to attend college. The talent, resilience, hard work, and high achievement of our students earned them admission to UC Santa Cruz, and will prepare them to have an extraordinary impact on the world.

UC Santa Cruz propels student success. We have been ranked among the top public universities in the nation for social mobility and—underscoring our reputation for leading positive change—third in the nation for students focused on making an impact on the world. UC Santa Cruz changes students' trajectories—and equips them to change the world.

But for many prospective students, investing in higher education and pursuing their career interests can feel out of reach. About a third of UC Santa Cruz undergraduates are eligible for a federal Pell Grant, which generally means having a total family income of \$50,000 or less. In a recent survey, nearly 40 percent of UC Santa Cruz undergraduates reported experiencing anxiety and difficulty in focusing on their studies because they were worried about paying for housing. Even with partial assistance, some students find that taking out loans and securing part-time work to cover additional costs is not enough.

Creating a genuinely successful higher education experience requires a holistic approach—one that ensures that students have access to financial support, secure sources of housing and food, mental health

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A portrait of Jazmine Miles, a young woman with dark skin and long, dark braids. She is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt over a grey top. She has a gold nose ring and large, ornate earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with greenery and a body of water. The image is partially overlaid by a blue graphic element consisting of several concentric, wavy lines.

**I WAS ABLE TO
SEE THE WAY
IN WHICH
COMMUNITIES
ARE BEING
IMPACTED BY
THE SOCIAL
STRUCTURES
IN PLACE.**

Jazmine Miles

*Undergraduate research participant,
Sociology major and film minor,
Merrill College*

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The Student Success Initiative

The cost of higher education should not be a barrier for any student. All students should have access to the full range of educational and research experiences that amplify professional and social capital.

support, and connections that will catalyze their social mobility. UC Santa Cruz is committed to building a greater sense of belonging for all students. We strive to ensure that students receive financial support to minimize debt, increase student retention and graduation rates, gain career-related experience, and build social connections to access the programs and people who will open doorways beyond the classroom and the campus. We want to create the conditions for all graduates to successfully launch their careers, or continue their academic journeys, for the greatest societal impact.

Graduate Students: Fueling the Future

UC Santa Cruz is one of only 66 members of the prestigious Association of American Universities, an accomplishment limited to institutions at the forefront of research impact and educational excellence. This membership reflects the world-changing capacity and quality of UC Santa Cruz's faculty, research output, and graduate programs.

Top graduate students seek out UC Santa Cruz to work alongside our world-renowned faculty. Graduate students fuel our research enterprise and multiply our research capacity by contributing diverse perspectives, new questions, and bold ambitions. UC Santa Cruz plays a critical role in encouraging under-

represented students to pursue advanced degrees. This extraordinary diversity advances knowledge creation and informs policy decisions as these students go on to successful careers. It also enhances the success of our undergraduate students as they benefit from the teaching, guidance, and inspiration of a thriving and diverse graduate cohort.

Yet the high cost of living in Santa Cruz has become an obstacle to UC Santa Cruz continuing to be an institution of choice for applicants. Many graduate students seek outside work to sustain themselves during their studies, which distracts them from their research and prolongs their time to degree completion. These demands may also crowd out time for personal well-being and professional development.

UC Santa Cruz is committed to five-year graduate support packages for doctoral students—including increasing the availability of summer funding—to allow emerging scholars to focus on their research efforts through the completion of their dissertations. We want to provide increased access to professional development and mentoring support to ensure that graduate students can explore potential careers as cutting-edge leaders in their fields, both within and outside academia. We are committed to providing additional access to mentors and campus support systems to help nurture a healthy environment for personal success and well-being.



**I WANT TO BE IN
A POSITION OF
LEADERSHIP TO
HELP MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.**

Pearl Ibeanusi

*Scholarship recipient,
Community studies and education,
democracy, and justice double major,
Stevenson College*

THE STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

The Student Success Initiative will increase financial support for undergraduate and graduate students while advancing access to the guidance and experiences that are fundamental to providing a holistic approach to education. In this way, the Student Success Initiative will help create the framework for students to successfully transition to successful careers as UC Santa Cruz alumni. This transformative effort will enhance our existing resources and develop new programs, opportunities, and other means of support for Banana Slugs.

The Student Success Initiative consists of three overarching priorities:

Reducing Financial Barriers

The cost of higher education should not be a barrier or cause of distress for any student. We believe that all students should have access to the full range of educational and research experiences that amplify professional and social capital.

We're creating educational equity and building generational potential by providing financial support for students—through scholarships for undergraduate students and graduate student fellowships—to help cover their educational costs and provide research opportunities.

Alleviating student debt enables students to focus their energies on their

AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY



Photo: Emma Chiang

Graduate Fellowship Emboldens an Artistic Voice

Dorothy Santos recalls her mother—an immigrant from the Philippines—trying to tone down her Filipino accent at work.

Santos was hurt and frustrated by the experience—and inspired to pursue higher education in order to create positive change. Now a doctoral candidate in film and digital media at UC Santa Cruz, Santos studies the way the human voice is trained and mediated—all part of her research in feminist media histories, critical medical anthropology, tech, race, and ethics. Santos's dissertation focuses on voice recognition and assistive technologies.

Santos has earned numerous achievements as a graduate student. She received the Film and Digital Media Department 2020–21 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award and is one of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts 100 in 2021 for “extraordinary commitment to building sustainable, equitable, and regenerative communities.” Santos cofounded the collaborative and politically engaged arts platform REFRESH and is the executive director of Processing Foundation, a nonprofit committed to the visual arts, software literacy, accessibility, and inclusion. In addition, she is a lecturer at San Jose State University in the Digital Media Art program.

But if it weren't for the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, which pays her tuition and provides her with a stipend for her doctoral studies, Santos wouldn't be at UC Santa Cruz creating positive change.

“I am eternally grateful—I would not have pursued graduate work if not for that fellowship,” says Santos.

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The Student Success Initiative

Philanthropic support will help to scale the number of opportunities available to students and deepen their community impact.

AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY



Early Field Experiences Lead to Future Success

“Look,” said Abe Borker, program director for the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program at UC Santa Cruz, pointing up at a small bird. “That’s an olive-sided flycatcher,” he noted, as a diverse collection of scholars craned their heads to get a view.

The sighting was more than just a *Wild Kingdom* moment for students. It was an example of a growing effort on the UC Santa Cruz campus to retain students in underrepresented groups in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) majors by providing early field research opportunities.

A 2020 UC Santa Cruz study found that field courses boosted the confidence of all students, but especially those from underrepresented groups—who, nationally, leave STEM majors at nearly twice the rate of their white peers. The UC Santa Cruz study also found students from marginalized groups who took field courses were more likely to remain in their major and graduate with a higher GPA.

With global problems like climate change and disease outbreaks looming, creating a diverse community of thinkers is crucial to solving those challenges. With five natural reserves totalling more than 10,000 acres of wildland, UC Santa Cruz is well positioned to provide field-based experiences that will develop a talented and even more diverse cadre of scientists, teachers, and leaders to meet the challenges of the future.

chosen field, decreasing anxiety and supporting their well-being. Increasing scholarships can help replace the student loan portions of the financial aid package—which many students meet by working multiple jobs—so students can better focus their efforts and graduate on time and with less debt. If we can more effectively reduce the financial burden on our students, many of the other stresses and pressures they face that adversely affect their education experience will be reduced or may be eliminated.

At the graduate level, fellowship support is more than a life-changing opportunity for students; the university benefits from an infusion of energy and new ideas into creative and research collaborations, with potentially far-reaching effects. Because of our current funding resources, UC Santa Cruz graduate students spend an outsized proportion of their time working as teaching assistants and graduate student instructors. Adding fellowship support, with a focus on summers, can help reduce time to degree, which can reduce the overall costs for students and help them begin their careers more quickly.

Navigating University Life

Navigating the complexities of university life can feel daunting and

overwhelming, particularly for students from less-resourced backgrounds. UC Santa Cruz provides a roadmap for undergraduates to help guide them.

For undergraduates who might otherwise feel lost at a large research university, UC Santa Cruz's unique college system provides a strong sense of community. Each of our 10 colleges offers a vibrant living and learning environment where students feel socially and academically connected and supported. The Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning supports inclusive teaching practices, as well as redesigns of key courses through evidence-based collaborative approaches. Student Affairs and Success supports student engagement and career readiness. The Academic Excellence Program (ACE) increases diversity in STEM—preparing students from primarily underrepresented backgrounds for academic and professional success. Initiatives across campus provide students with the guidance they need to access programs that can help them with vital skills: networking, forming study groups, finding a mentor—resources that give them a sense of confidence and direction, which are significant determinants of college satisfaction, retention, and future success.

Beyond the Classroom

Some of the most remarkable aspects of a UC Santa Cruz education happen outside of the traditional classroom.

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AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY



The Game-Changing Power of Mentorship


Recent graduate Desiderio Ascencio encountered some challenges midway through his career at UC Santa Cruz, and his grades started to slip. With the help of mentors, Ascencio was able to work in a research lab where he learned coding—and discovered his passions for neuroscience and computer science. Then he was accepted as a summer research assistant for the STEM Diversity Programs.

“Both of these environments were pivotal to my finding the confidence to explore my interests as a student and as a scientist,” says Ascencio. “I changed my major and became more interested in my classes and everything around me.” A UC Santa Cruz cognitive science graduate with a minor in computer science, Ascencio is now enrolled in the Computational and Neurosystems Ph.D. program at the California Institute of Technology.

Knowing what a difference mentors made in his education, Ascencio has opened doors for other students. He served as logistics lead for GraceHacks, a group started by students to close the gender gap in science, technology, engineering, and math.

“I wanted to be in an environment where I could motivate and help other people in underrepresented groups to reach their potential,” Ascencio says. “That’s what the research lab and STEM Diversity were doing for me.”

UC Santa Cruz’s Slug Mentor Program enhances the student experience by linking students one-on-one with a peer mentor. Students are paired with someone invested in their success—a person ready to listen, inspire, help navigate challenges, and recognize opportunities. Students learn what to expect in school, how to approach challenges, and ways to gain career advice. At the same time, mentors build their networks and develop skills to become better professionals and leaders. Increased investment in the mentoring program benefits mentors and mentees today and provides them with important skills for tomorrow.



THE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE PROGRAM (ACE) IS A BLESSING. EVERYONE SHOULD DO IT.

Jonathan Green

*Participant, Science Education & Mentorship
in Latinx Lives in Academia (SEMILLA)
Mentorship Program and Academic
Excellence Program (ACE),
Molecular, cell and
developmental biology major,
Rachel Carson College*

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The Student Success Initiative

UC Santa Cruz is known for its holistic approach to learning that encourages students to embrace life-changing experiences and provides them with a well-rounded educational background.

On our visually spectacular campus and at research sites along the coast, undergraduates and graduate students participate in field research, collecting and analyzing important research data. They work with nonprofit organizations, creating community impact. They also work in research labs, perform in concerts and plays, and volunteer for student collectives.

UC Santa Cruz will expand its experiential learning and co-curricular opportunities and seek funding to expand paid community and campus internships and research programs. On-campus internships of all sorts can help students get the experience they need to accelerate their transition to the workforce after graduation. Philanthropic support will help to scale the number of opportunities available to students and deepen their community impact.

For undergraduates, internships and research opportunities help them to develop work and life skills, as well as to explore career possibilities. The colleges serve as an incubator space for interdisciplinary learning. Banana Slugs who represent UC Santa Cruz in our vibrant Athletics program develop valuable leadership and teamwork skills as well as discipline as they balance their schedule between hours of

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AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITY



Photo: Steve McKay

Youth Leadership Through Research

A partnership between UC Santa Cruz and the United Way of Santa Cruz supports youth empowerment and leadership. Led by Associate Professor of Sociology Rebecca London and Professor of Psychology Regina Langhout, the program pairs UC Santa Cruz faculty and undergraduates with local high school and middle school students to conduct community-engaged research. UC Santa Cruz undergraduates and local youth leaders gain opportunities to study issues affecting health and well-being in surrounding communities, and also support college readiness and success, particularly for Latinx students who are or will be the first in their families to attend college. Funded by a highly competitive grant provided by three private foundations, this initiative gives UC Santa Cruz an opportunity to build new internal structures and policies that advance the university's impact in the community. It also provides for the creation of a new Campus + Community center to help connect university scholarship and research with the needs of community partners. Thanks to the vision of London and Langhout, UC Santa Cruz is helping both undergraduates and community youth learn new skills, develop as leaders, and explore career horizons—all while advancing the needs of Santa Cruz County residents.

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The Student Success Initiative

practice, games, and staying on top of their academics.

In the Graduate Division, enhanced professional development opportunities for students across all disciplines are an important element in helping to chart students' paths to success. Programs like The Humanities Institute (THI) Workshops and PhD+ Series—part of THI's Graduate Student Success Program—expand graduate student training and provide space for exploring questions students might not know to ask. These programs also provide information about career options, internship possibilities, grants and fellowships, work/life balance, online identity issues, and more. Through additional financial support, we'll increase access to these graduate student programs—launching the next generation of trailblazing scholars and industry leaders.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN

a community of donors who, like you, are passionate about elevating our students' educational possibilities, strengthening their well-being, and generating momentum for social mobility so they are in the best position to meet and solve our world's biggest challenges.

JOIN US to continue to change students' trajectories so they can change the world.

AMPLIFYING OPPORTUNITIES



New Orientation Creates New Opportunities

For many students, starting their life as a university student can feel overwhelming—like everyone else but them already understands how it all works. UC Santa Cruz's transformative new approach to student orientation introduces students to university learning and strengthens students' sense of belonging. Our online, for-credit, asynchronous summer course connects students to the UC Santa Cruz campus and our many academic and social resources, while promoting community building and effective habits for academic success. The course was designed with equity in mind. Because students participate remotely, their families are not burdened with travel costs and lost wages that could be associated with an on-campus, multiday visit to Santa Cruz. The shift to online summer orientation positioned the campus well to face challenges brought on by the pandemic, though this advantage was not anticipated.

The new format moves UC Santa Cruz's orientation fully into the digital era, increasing students' knowledge and contributing to campus student success initiatives. It introduces students to the campus, demystifies the "hidden curriculum," addresses inequities in preparedness, connects new students to current students and faculty, builds a sense of belonging, and sparks intellectual discovery.

Tuition is covered for students with financial need, thanks to a grant from the campus provost/executive vice chancellor and the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Philanthropic support of this transformative course could ensure its ongoing excellence—and help students get started early on their path to college success.

Building for Tomorrow

As a writer and conservationist, Rachel Carson promoted a fundamental belief: “In nature nothing exists alone.” This simple, yet revolutionary view launched the modern environmental movement. By naming College Eight after Rachel Carson, donors to UC Santa Cruz recognized her courage and ability to activate the public—traits that are as important today as ever. The Rachel Carson College endowment from the Helen and Will Webster Foundation created research and environmental education opportunities for students in perpetuity. We are inspired by our donors who fulfill their philanthropic vision through the naming of our colleges. Colleges Nine and Ten have yet to be named, providing the opportunity for philanthropy to shape the lives of generations of Banana Slugs to come.




ABOVE: Students celebrate the naming of Rachel Carson College (formerly College 8).



Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program

Bernarda Martinez is passionate about working with marginalized communities—a passion nurtured through participation in the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program (CUIP) as an intern for Undocumented Student Services (USS). Majoring in cognitive science with a minor in sociology, Martinez was inspired to intern with USS after attending the 540% Slug Extended Orientation. There, Martinez, a Mexican immigrant, understood for the first time the importance of being in community with other undocumented people. As an intern, Martinez created a welcoming space for all people, developing workshops and events to address intersectionalities within migrant/immigrant communities—building relationships between undocumented UC Santa Cruz students and local undocumented community members.

The CUIP provides full-time students the opportunity to learn valuable professional skills through paid internships. Interns work within programs and departments throughout the university, and attend a two-unit leadership seminar. With direct support from mentors—and a program made possible by the generosity of donors—students learn to conceive, develop, and execute a project relevant to their interests and position, and develop professional skills that will help smooth the transition to life after graduation.



**EVERYONE HAS
THEIR TIME
WHEN THEY
ARE GOING TO
ACCOMPLISH
CERTAIN THINGS
THEY WANT TO
DO, AND I THINK
NOW IS THE
TIME FOR ME.**

Raymond Hess

*Research scholarship recipient,
Earth and planetary sciences major,
Oakes College*



**THE REAL
CHANGE
IS US**

Student Success Initiative

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UC SANTA CRUZ

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