

**College of Letters & Science**  
**Undergraduate Studies Division**  
**Strategic Plan Highlights**  
**Academic Year 22-23**



## UC Berkeley Letters & Science prepares undergraduate students for lives of consequence

The L&S Undergraduate Studies Division supports the College's undergraduate mission through its emphasis on three Strategic Priorities: Belonging, Wayfinding, and Scholarly Engagement. Belonging supports students in finding their place in the College and in thriving at Berkeley. Wayfinding engages students in navigating through the College and beyond. Scholarly Engagement empowers students in shaping their own intellectual futures as active learners.

### Our Commitment

We, the members of the Berkeley College of Letters & Science Undergraduate Studies Division, are committed to forwarding efforts of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice (DEIBJ). We hope to begin realizing these ideals by building trust both within our division and with the greater Berkeley L&S community. Our commitment to DEIBJ and trust building must inform and direct our efforts to execute the Strategic Priorities that follow. We are further committed to supporting our staff and faculty colleagues to ensure their overall wellness and the sustainability of their work.



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**The UC Berkeley College of Letters & Science Undergraduate Studies Division Strategic Plan was adopted in August 2022 under the leadership of L&S Executive Dean Jennifer Johnson-Hanks.**

## Belonging

### Fostering a Sense of Community at All Levels

- Build a division that reflects and represents the diversity of its membership
- Work toward ensuring staff and faculty diversity is proportionate to student diversity
- Combat the culture of toxic competition that inhibits wellness and belonging
- Improve the morale and well-being of students, staff, and faculty
- Leverage technology to help with outreach and community building

### Creating Connections

- Ensure every student has a touchpoint in the College
- Share learning and knowledge across campus units
- Find opportunities for mentorship for students, staff, and faculty
- Create more opportunities for collaboration across affiliations
- Find the most effective modes of communication for different groups

### Building Trust

- Ensure that all community members feel safe and supported within the Division
- Partner with groups and organizations that are trusted by marginalized communities
- Focus outreach efforts on marginalized spaces and communities, including transfer and non-traditional students

### Amplifying Diverse Voices

- Incorporate input and feedback of diverse students, staff, and faculty
- Encourage collaboration in decision making
- Increase valuation of non-tenure track work and input in curricular decision making in the Undergraduate Studies Division

## Wayfinding

### Embracing Comprehensive Wayfinding

- Embrace a wayfinding approach that accounts for the whole student and many student identities
- Engage students in the development and scaling of the effort
- Enable early and sustained access to well-coordinated information and outreach about on- and off-campus opportunities that have been intentionally designed and selected with student aspirations and concerns in mind

### Prioritizing Equitable Access

- Prioritize equitable access and identify and dismantle obstacles
- Meet students where they are

### Teaching Wayfinding

- Frame/communicate the experience of wayfinding as a teachable life skill
- Engage students early and often
- Support staff and faculty as sustainable teachers and partners in wayfinding

### Resourcing Wayfinding

- Harness the power of technology to increase access and effectively reach students, while also aiding those who support them
- Incentivize connective and collaborative technological systems across campus

## Scholarly Engagement

### Fostering Holistic Learning

- Foster an environment where each student recognizes the relevance of their academic work in their lives and communities
- Create opportunities for participation in applied work, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and professional development opportunities that reflect students' personal values and ethical commitments

### Developing Scholarly Community

- Develop trustworthy and affirmative advising circles (staff, instructors, advisors) that intentionally engage with students in meta-thinking about their scholarship
- Foster an intellectual community that models a commitment to lifelong learning and mentoring

### Encouraging Scholarly Self-Actualization

- Provide students with the space, time, resources, and support required to explore their interests and follow their curiosity
- Encourage students to take risks through participation in research and other types of creative, project-based learning opportunities



# Belonging

## Building Trust and Making Connections to Foster a Sense of Community

### Promoting OUA Staff Retention and Well-Being



The L&S Office of Undergraduate Advising was awarded a Stupski grant in the amount of \$30,000 by the NACADA/Stupski Foundation to promote retention and staff well-being in L&S OUA. Using these funds, OUA put on events including burrito week, a frontline staff retreat, and a community building/de-stress event, which was held at Codornices Park in Berkeley and included a catered lunch, appreciation gift bags, and small group activities addressing cultural wealth and collective wisdom.

### L&S Undergraduate Studies All-Division Meetings



During Spring 2023, the L&S Undergraduate Studies All-Division Meetings were expanded to include speakers from both divisional and campus units with the goals of creating connections and learning more about work across the division, College, and campus. These meetings especially seek to highlight work that is rooted in DEIBJ, as reflected by the Spring 2023 topics of Disability Studies and Latinx Thriving. Breakout rooms following these talks give colleagues from across the Undergraduate Studies Division the opportunity to connect and share their experiences.

### Academic Engagement Joint Staff Meetings

In Spring 2023, the staff in the Office of Undergraduate Research & Scholarships and the staff who support Curricular Engagement Initiatives began inviting key campus partners to our biweekly joint staff meetings. Their goal has been to break down silos, keep campus partners up to date about what their offices are working on and what's on the horizon, share common challenges and best practices, strengthen relationships, and identify opportunities to collaborate on projects to advance shared goals. In Spring 2023, these joint staffs focused on synergies with units under the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE), meeting with faculty and staff in Discovery, Center for Teaching and Learning, Berkeley Connect, and Advising Strategy + Training.

### Welcoming New Students to the L&S Community

#### GBO L&S Welcome



The GBO L&S Welcome is new students' first experience of what it means to be a part of L&S. In previous years, L&S organized a "First Lecture Series" as part of GBO: concurrently-scheduled sessions for each of the five divisions in L&S, where a dynamic faculty member delivered a lecture on their area of research. In Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, L&S redesigned the college-wide welcome for new first-year admits and transfer students with the goal of integrating students into L&S. During the Welcome, a multidisciplinary group of faculty discussed the topic "What is a fact?" from their disciplinary perspectives and methods, giving new students a sense of the breadth and depth of intellectual inquiry that characterizes L&S. Current students shared their journeys in L&S, with a focus on navigating campus and finding community within it. The goal is for new students to experience collectively what it means to be a part of L&S, a place where big and bold things happen.

### OUA Yield Participation

Advising staff from the L&S Office of Undergraduate Advising participated in yield events across the state to present and answer questions for prospective students, exposing them to the College and the advising office early. Staffers also participated and presented in other Admissions events for students and their families throughout the year, including Cal Day and the Berkeley Showcase.

# Wayfinding

## Resourcing Wayfinding Through Advising and Role Alignment

### L&S OUA Infusion of Resources



In partnership with L&S Advising leadership, the L&S Undergraduate Division Dean's Office worked to develop and support a plan to expand the college advising unit with additional and new positions that leverage staff talent, build career ladders, support student success, and enhance connections across the College

and the campus. A great stride to this end was the hiring of the inaugural Assistant Dean of Advising, Sharon Mueller, who will help lead strategic planning and vision setting for the L&S undergraduate experience, manage the Office of Undergraduate Advising, and support campus-wide collaboration and engagement. Mueller brings decades of advising experience, including her most recent role as College of Engineering Director of Advising and Policy. Additionally, new supervisor roles were created to support various teams within OUA and senior advisor roles were redesigned to allocate more time to advising.

### Streamlining OUA Procedures and Policies for Students and Staff

Over the 22-23 academic year, the Office of Undergraduate Advising was agile in responding to College policy shifts and proactive in adapting their internal procedures to make their practices more equitable for students. In response to academic disruptions caused by the UAW strike in Fall 2022, the L&S Executive Committee allowed late grade option changes for L&S undergraduates. OUA worked tirelessly in conjunction with the Office of the Registrar and Student Information Systems to quickly implement this decision, manually processing over 6,400 grade option changes. Additionally, OUA streamlined the process for petitioning for excess units and readmission after dismissal by bringing these matters to Dean's Conference, where they could be discussed and adjudicated by a group rather than reviewed individually, resulting in more transparency and equity in decision making.

### Resources and Advising for New Students

The L&S Office of Undergraduate Advising reached massive swaths of new students with Golden Bear Advising 2022. OUA produced three GBA newsletters containing key information about developmental stages of the orientation process, accessed by 80 percent of all new students. Over 8,300 participants attended a GBA webinar in real time or viewed a GBA webinar recording, and advisers answered more than 1,000 questions from webinar participants. During GBA, L&S advisors sent 18 announcements to every new first-year student, responded to approximately 3,500 emails, and met with over 900 new L&S students during GBA office hours.

## Creating New Pathways for Student Degree Progress in L&S and Beyond

### Establishing a New Path for the Entry Level Writing Requirement

During the 22-23 academic year, the L&S Undergraduate Studies Division Dean's Office, College Writing Programs, and the Division's finance team worked in partnership with the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education (VPUE) and a dozen other units across campus to lead the design and implementation of a campus-wide Analytical Writing Placement Exam, previously administered systemwide by UCOP. It resulted in the first Berkeley Writing Assessment in May 2023 that drew nearly 1,000 new students. This assessment set the groundwork for timely degree completion through proper academic placement at the onset of their journey at Cal.

### Expanding Access to Reading and Composition Curriculum

On behalf of the campus, the L&S Undergraduate Studies Division Dean's Office coordinates the planning and offering of R&C in L&S and beyond. By carefully evaluating past trends and incorporating data from Admissions and CalAnswers, the Dean's Office has worked closely with other divisions to expand and titrate offerings, resulting in more than 600 additional seats in R&C classes in 22-23 compared to the prior year.

### Implementing Policy for Equitable Access to High Demand Majors

The L&S Undergraduate Studies Division Dean's Office began work in Spring 2022 to implement the new L&S high-demand major policy, which is intended to provide peace of mind to students by ensuring that their application will be subject to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions holistic review process. Starting in Fall 2023, first-year admits who selected a high-demand major on their University of California application will be guaranteed a spot in the major they selected (subject to completing the prerequisites, maintaining good academic standing in the College, and filing a declaration form).

First-year students admitted in Fall 2023 and beyond who did not indicate a high-demand major when they applied but later wish to declare will be subject to a comprehensive review after enrolling at Berkeley. This review will include quantitative and qualitative criteria, such as academic and personal accomplishments by the student along with consideration of the context of those accomplishments and opportunities afforded to the student. Admission to Letters & Science high-demand majors based on these criteria will create an overall more fair and equitable process as compared to the preexisting criteria, which focused solely on students' major prerequisite grade point average (GPA).



# Scholarly Engagement

*Cultivating Scholarship Through the Support and Development of Common Good Curricula and Opportunities*

## L&S Futures



During the 22-23 academic year, the L&S Futures project worked to understand the skills, knowledge, and dispositions L&S should seek to inculcate in its undergraduate students by engaging with students, faculty, staff, peer institutions, alumni, potential employers, and civic leaders. The findings from 22-23 will inform the L&S Futures Design Committee, chaired by Associate Dean Shannon Steen, in their work during the 23-24 academic year. More information and reports from 22-23 can be found on the L&S Futures webpage.

## L&S First-Year Pathways

Art, History, and the Moral Imagination

- **Hub Course** American Studies 10: Crisis and Cultural Innovation (Art and Literature breadth)
- **Wing 1** Sociology 1: Introduction to Sociology (Social and Behavioral Sciences breadth)
- **Wing 2** Philosophy 2: Individual Morality and Social Justice (Philosophy and Values breadth)

Three images are shown side-by-side. The first is a black and white portrait of Charlie Chaplin in his iconic bowler hat and mustache. The second is a close-up of a green, textured sculpture of a human face. The third is a young boy in a patterned shirt singing into a microphone.

The L&S First-Year Pathways program, which was built over the 22-23 academic year and launched in Fall 2023, enables first-year students to have a small, themed, cohort-based experience with their peers while completing their L&S Breadth Requirements. Themes for Fall 2023 include Technology and Society; Art, History, and the Moral Imagination; and Neuroscience, Philosophy, and Society. More information can be found on the L&S First-Year Pathways website.

*Fostering Scholarly Community within the College of Letters & Science and the L&S Undergraduate Studies Division*

## Creative Writing and Research for Lower-Division Students

College Writing Programs continues to focus on its R&C curriculum, endeavoring to make it a meaningful experience for lower-division students. In addition to the Chiang Research Festival, which highlights the research of all students in R4B courses (approximately 350 students per semester), CWP encourages students to find platforms to share their writing and research. During the 22-23 academic year, CWP students met this challenge by earning honors in the 2023 Charlene Conrad Library Prize. These students include:

### Award Recipients

Ryan Gottschalk; "Erased: An Exploration of Queer Japanese Americans' Experience During the Internment Period." College Writing R4B, Pat Steenland

Inigo Macey; "Don't worry, it's a game! It's a game just like usual."—Metal Gear Solid 2, the Military-Entertainment Complex, and Memetics in the Digital Age." College Writing R4B, Carmen Acevedo Butcher

### Honorable Mentions

Medha Iyer; "Pulling the Plug: Equitable Guidelines for Machine Learning Neuroprognostication." College Writing R4B, Michael Larkin

Violet Edwards; "Redlining the Sky: Air Pollution and the Legacy of Redlining in West Oakland." College Writing R4B, Kimberly Freeman

## L&S Faculty Awards



In Spring 2023, the L&S Deans' Office and the L&S Advisory Board partnered to host the inaugural L&S Faculty Awards, which recognize outstanding faculty from across the College of Letters & Science. The Spring 2023 honorees are Jovan Scott Lewis (Geography), Michael Zaletel (Physics), SanSan Kwan (Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies), Leigh Raiford (African American Studies), and Iswar Hariharan (Molecular & Cell Biology).

## “Peregrine,” A New Student Literary Journal



College Writing Programs is launching a new student literary journal, “Peregrine,” whose inaugural issue is expected in September 2023. Two College Writing Programs lecturers will serve as faculty advisors for the journal, while other CWP faculty will volunteer in editorial, artistic, and advisory roles. Submissions will include fiction, poetry, creative or academic non-fiction, and one act plays or screenplays.

## Integrating Undergraduates into L&S Research Through OURS

Undergraduate research increases not just students’ scholarly development but also their sense of belonging, and the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarships (OURS) plays a pivotal role in improving student access to UC Berkeley’s dynamic and constantly evolving research landscape. In particular, the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (URAP) continues to be the campus’s most prominent pipeline to research, and was a recent recipient of the Berkeley Collegium’s Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. This past year URAP reached a historic high volume of students in the program, enrolling 1937 students into unit-bearing apprenticeship experiences with 349 mentors. In many ways, URAP exemplifies the profoundly intertwined relationship between research and teaching at the core of Berkeley’s mission, rendering visible the frontiers of research pursued by our world-class faculty and providing undergraduates with a point of entry and means of navigation.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Gates Foundation, the Underrepresented Researchers of Color (UROC), a student-led organization housed within OURS, brought to fruition a successful inaugural symposium. Organized around the theme, “Celebrating Diversity and Excellence in Research at Cal,” the program featured 14 lightning talks delivered by undergraduates who had participated in research programs across campus; a graduate student panel focused on peer-mentorship guidance; tabling by student-serving, DEIBJ-oriented programs across campus; and a keynote lecture by Dr. John Matsui. Another deliverable associated with the Gates-funded initiative was the completion of a peer-mentoring toolkit, authored by the graduate student coordinators of UROC, that will henceforth serve as a scalable resource for the student leaders of UROC. In addition to highlighting the history and mission of UROC, the toolkit has sections devoted to: peer-mentoring as a high-impact practice, best-practices for advising minoritized students, campus resources for underrepresented and historically marginalized students, tips on offering effective and impactful programming that align with student needs and tools for evaluation and assessment.

## Showcasing Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies Student Research

During Spring 2023, the Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Studies (UGIS) programs undergraduate students presented their research at the American Studies Senior Thesis Showcase and the Interdisciplinary Studies Field (ISF) Major Poster Session, both inaugural events.



Jacqueline Cox  
“Disrobe the Politician: How  
*Shelby County v. Holder* Disrupted  
the Relationship between the  
Supreme Court and Public  
Opinion”

Advised by:  
Alexander Craghead (American Studies)  
Alan Pomerantz (Legal Studies)

Held Wednesday, May 3, 2023, the American Studies Senior Thesis Showcase was a celebration of the research and writing conducted by UC Berkeley’s American Studies majors. They presented their thesis research on a range of topics related to time and place in America. The well-attended event was hosted by American Studies faculty, and it attracted emeriti American Studies faculty as attendees.



Held Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the day before the UGIS Commencement Ceremony, ISF seniors held a poster session on their research which addressed a significant research problem in the social sciences or the humanities. Faculty, family and friends attended as an additional graduation season celebration.

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