

UC SANTA CRUZ

Dean, Social Sciences Division

Leadership Profile

January 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The [University of California, Santa Cruz](#) seeks a collaborative leader and strategic convener to serve as the Dean of the [Social Sciences Division](#). The Dean serves as the executive officer of the Division and partners closely with the Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor to lead the Division and help guide the academic program of one of the nation's most distinctive research universities through a period of transformative opportunity and change. The Dean will join a highly collegial and collaborative group of academic leaders and be expected to work closely with the deans of the four other academic divisions (Arts, Engineering, Humanities, Physical and Biological Sciences).

Set within 2,000 acres of coastal redwood forest overlooking Monterey Bay, UC Santa Cruz is a top-tier public research university that combines academic excellence with a bold commitment to access, sustainability, and social impact. With a total enrollment of nearly 20,000 students—approximately 17,370 undergraduates and 1,890 graduate students—UC Santa Cruz is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and holds R1 status. In fiscal year 2024, UC Santa Cruz secured over \$250 million in extramural research funding, reflecting a dynamic research enterprise. The University's annual operating budget exceeds \$1 billion, with core funds supporting its mission of teaching, research, and public service. Guided by its strategic plan, *Leading the Change*, UC Santa Cruz is advancing student success, interdisciplinary innovation, and inclusive excellence.

The Division of Social Sciences at UC Santa Cruz encompasses eight academic departments: Anthropology, Economics, Education, Environmental Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, Politics, Psychology, and Sociology. It is the largest division on campus, enrolling roughly 36% of UCSC's undergraduates and 17% of its graduate students. The Division offers fifteen undergraduate majors, four master's programs, and eight doctoral programs—many of them interdisciplinary in scope and design.

Research in Social Sciences is supported by a wide array of interdisciplinary centers and initiatives that address critical social, economic, and policy issues. These include the Center for Agroecology, which manages a 35-acre organic farm in partnership with UCSC's Agricultural Experiment Station, as well as the Center for Economic Justice and Action, the Center for Integrated Spatial Research, the Dolores Huerta Research Center for the Americas, the Center for Analytical Finance, the Science and Justice Research Center, the Center for Statistical Analysis in Social Sciences, the Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History, the Center for Labor and Community, the Right Livelihood Center, and the Institute for Social Transformation. The Division also houses two residential undergraduate colleges—College Nine and John R. Lewis College—whose Provost reports to the Dean and the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education. In total, the Dean oversees a \$40 million budget, approximately 150 full-time faculty, and more than 100 staff members dedicated to advancing the Division's teaching, research, and public service mission.

The next Dean of Social Sciences at UC Santa Cruz will assume this role at a pivotal time. As the Division with the largest undergraduate enrollment, a diverse interdisciplinary research portfolio, and a deep commitment to social justice, Social Sciences requires an experienced leader who will lead with vision and creativity. Navigating fiscal realities while driving innovation within the Division, the Dean will be tasked with strengthening research and teaching infrastructure, advancing graduate pathways, enriching experiential learning, deepening community engagement, and amplifying the Division's impact locally and globally.

Equally critical will be the Dean's role in expanding fundraising and strategic partnerships. The Dean must articulate a compelling vision that attracts transformative investments and cultivates collaborations with industry, government, and nonprofits. Through courageous leadership, creative problem-solving, and a commitment to socially engaged scholarship, the next Dean will position Social Sciences as a dynamic, resilient, and globally impactful division, ensuring its continued role as a leader in innovation, equity, and public good.

The Dean must be an accomplished academic leader with national or international distinction as a scholar and educator, qualified for appointment as a tenured full professor in the Division of Social Sciences. The candidate must bring extensive experience in fostering interdisciplinary research and education, including the creation of new academic programs, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with administrators, faculty, students, and staff within a framework of shared governance. They must show a deep appreciation for the mission and responsibilities of a public R1 university serving a diverse state, coupled with a strong commitment to equity and inclusion. Proven aptitude and success in fundraising and securing external support, as well as the ability to cultivate and sustain positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders, will be imperative.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Dean, Social Sciences Division

The Dean of the Division of Social Sciences, reporting to the Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor (CP/EVC), is the chief officer of the Division. The Dean serves as the Division's executive leader, representative, and administrator and has responsibility for a full range of activities associated with the management and promotion of excellence of the research, teaching, and service missions of the Division.

The Dean oversees the hiring, promotion, and retention of faculty and staff; facilitates the development and oversight of the graduate and undergraduate curriculum and degree programs; has responsibility for financial matters including budgetary and space allocations; provides strategic vision and manages the academic leadership of the Division, including department chairs and associate and assistant deans; serves as a member of the CP/EVC's Dean's Advisory Council and Academic Leadership Group, and other campus and university-wide committees as delegated by the Chancellor and the CP/EVC; works with campus leadership, the Academic Senate, and other academic units in the development, maintenance, and implementation of innovative academic programs; participates in campuswide decisions and policy development; oversees the health and safety regulations for the Division; and fosters an inclusive and equitable approach to faculty and staff recruitment and retention, and to the overall climate of the Division.

The Division of Social Sciences at UC Santa Cruz comprises eight academic departments that include Anthropology, Economics, Education, Environmental Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, Politics, Psychology, and Sociology. Home to approximately 36% of UC Santa Cruz's undergraduate majors and almost 17% of the graduate students, the Division offers fifteen baccalaureate degrees, four master's degrees, and eight doctoral degrees, many of which are interdisciplinary.

Faculty research in the Social Sciences is supported by the Division's highly interdisciplinary [research centers and initiatives](#) that address salient social, economic, and policy issues. One of these is the Center for Agroecology (CFA), which oversees a 35-acre organic farm on campus in coordination with our [Agricultural Experiment Station](#). Others include the UC Santa Cruz Center for Economic Justice and Action (CEJA), the Center for Integrated Spatial Research (CISR), the [Dolores Huerta Research Center for the Americas](#), the Center for Analytical Finance (CAFIN), the [Science and Justice Research Center](#), the Center for Statistical Analysis in Social Sciences (CSASS), the [Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History](#), the [Center for Labor and Community](#), the [Right Livelihood Center](#), and the [Institute for Social Transformation](#).

Two residential undergraduate colleges ([College Nine](#) and [John R. Lewis College](#)) are formally affiliated with the Division, and the Provost, who oversees both colleges, reports directly to the Dean and Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education. The Dean manages a total budget of nearly \$40M, and approximately 150 full-time faculty and over 100 full-time staff dedicated to the Division's teaching, research, and public service endeavors.

The Dean is the highest authority within the Division of the Social Sciences, with responsibilities that include the following:

- Provides vision and leadership to inspire the pursuit of excellence and impact through the research, teaching, and service missions of the Division.
- Sets and promotes high academic standards and agendas in instruction and research.
- Facilitates the review and approval process for establishing new academic undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and for overseeing the curricular planning and development within the Division.
- Cultivates partnerships with other campus units in the development of interdisciplinary academic and research programs.
- Creates opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and partnership between students, faculty, community, and industry leaders.
- Working with campus and divisional leadership, develops a vision for faculty hiring priorities, and makes recommendations to the CP/EVC for faculty recruitment.
- Administers academic personnel policy, including recommending and, when delegated, approving appointments, promotion, discipline, and termination of academic personnel, as well as leave policies.
- Responsible for faculty review, including merit and promotion.
- Authorizes the initiation of faculty recruitments; negotiates and approves faculty start-up packages in consultation with the CP/EVC.
- Supports and fosters the scholarly development of faculty, particularly junior faculty.
- Fosters research through the advancement of faculty research programs, interdisciplinary centers and institutes, and external collaborations with government and industry partners.
- Is responsible for the financial affairs of the Division, including managing the Division's resources, allocating financial resources within the Division, and making budgetary allocation requests.
- Responsible for developing the Division's space proposals, for allocating space within the Division, and for approving requests for renovations and alterations in the Division's space.
- Responsible for guiding short- and long-range planning of minor and major capital improvement projects for the Division.
- Uses inclusive and equitable recruiting practices to maintain an excellent faculty, staff, and graduate student body.
- Works closely with the divisional and campus development offices to raise funds, to cultivate major gifts, and to promote the external image and communications of the Division.
- Enhances and develops alumni networks.
- Is a member of the CP/EVC's Dean's Advisory Council and serves on other campus and university-wide committees as designated.

- Works with campus leadership, the Academic Senate, and other campus offices on the implementation and development of campus-wide decisions and policy.
- Supervises the operations of the Division, hires and evaluates staff performance, and provides direction to the staff.
- Promotes a supportive and respectful environment for faculty, staff, and students that adheres to the Principles of Community.
- Ensures that the Division's faculty and staff complete mandatory compliance training.
- Responsible for the Division's observance of proper health and safety regulations, in coordination with the campus health and safety office.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Dean of Social Sciences at UC Santa Cruz will step into a pivotal leadership role at a time of both challenge and opportunity. The Division is home to the largest undergraduate enrollment on campus, a diverse and interdisciplinary research portfolio, and a deep commitment to social justice and community engagement. Yet it faces significant financial constraints, evolving expectations for graduate education, and the need to sustain its distinctive programs and centers. The Dean will be asked to lead with vision and creativity—balancing fiscal realities with bold innovation, strengthening research and teaching infrastructure, and amplifying the Division's impact locally and globally. The following priorities outline the most critical areas where the next Dean's leadership will shape the future of Social Sciences at UCSC.

Lead Strategic Innovation in Addressing Financial Challenges

The next Dean will guide the Social Sciences Division through a period of significant transformation, shaping the Division's future in alignment with UCSC's priorities and budget realities. Rather than simply managing constraints, this is a chance to reimagine structures and programs to ensure long-term vitality. The Dean must lead a transparent, collaborative process to set priorities, communicate openly about trade-offs, foster trust, and inspire confidence during a time of difficult decisions. By championing creative initiatives—such as new interdisciplinary majors, accelerated master's programs, and innovative partnerships—the Dean can position Social Sciences as a model of resilience and ingenuity. This is a moment to turn fiscal challenges into a catalyst for bold, forward-thinking ideas and change. Success will depend on balancing short-term fiscal realities with a long-term vision that positions Social Sciences as a dynamic, innovative leader within UCSC.

Reimagine and Elevate Research Infrastructure

Social Sciences boasts the broadest research portfolio on campus, spanning psychology and brain sciences, economics, education, environmental studies, and agroecology, and brings in approximately \$40 million in research funding. Social Sciences' expansive research portfolio offers a unique platform for innovation. The next Dean will have the opportunity to strengthen and modernize the Division's research ecosystem, ensuring it thrives in a rapidly changing academic landscape. This includes developing new models for shared services, forging strategic partnerships, and aligning resources with UCSC's mission and values. By championing signature programs like the Center for Agroecology and the Institute for Social Transformation, among others, the Dean can amplify UCSC's leadership in socially engaged scholarship. This is a chance to build a research infrastructure that not only sustains excellence but also sparks new interdisciplinary collaborations and external funding opportunities.

Innovate Undergraduate and Graduate Education and Enrich Experiential Learning

The evolving landscape of undergraduate and graduate education presents an opportunity for Social Sciences to lead in designing financially sustainable programs that meet the needs of today's students and society, leveraging UCSC's strengths. The Dean will play a critical role in building and further strengthening emerging undergraduate programs—such as [Global and Community Health](#), an interdisciplinary program that bridges the sciences, social sciences, engineering, humanities, and arts—advancing accelerated master's pathways, cultivating industry partnerships, and securing grant-funded fellowships to support diverse learners. The Dean can elevate UCSC's hallmark experiential programs—such as the Community Studies field program—by advocating for resources and expanding access to paid internships. By integrating academic rigor with real-world engagement, the Dean will ensure that Social Sciences continues to deliver undergraduate and graduate educational experiences that prepare students for leadership and impact—a hallmark of the Division. This dual focus on graduate and undergraduate enrichment is essential to sustaining UCSC's reputation for transformative, socially engaged education.

Deepen Community Engagement and Public Impact

Community engagement is not peripheral to Social Sciences—it is central to its identity and impact. Faculty and students work deeply with communities across Santa Cruz, the Monterey Bay area, and beyond, addressing issues from housing and water to climate justice and food security. An example of this work is "Campus + Community," a hub for coordinating and facilitating partnerships between UC Santa Cruz and community groups. They support action-oriented scholarship and applied research that advances social justice and engages the priorities, assets, and aspirations of local communities. The Dean will be expected to amplify these efforts by strengthening local relationships, building new partnerships, and showcasing the Division's contributions to the public good. This includes advocating for resources to support community-based research, ensuring students have access to paid internships, and elevating public scholarship as a core value in merit and promotion

processes. By positioning Social Sciences as a trusted partner and thought leader in addressing critical societal challenges, the Dean can strengthen UCSC's role in advancing equity and sustainability in California and beyond.

Champion Equity, Inclusion, and Academic Freedom

Equity and academic freedom are foundational to UCSC's identity, and the next Dean will have the opportunity to lead boldly in these areas. UCSC is an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). These designations validate UCSC's dedication to inclusivity and open pathways for historically underserved groups, aligning with goals for equity and holistic student success. By reinforcing the Division's commitment to equity and inclusion, the Dean can ensure that Social Sciences remains a beacon for socially engaged scholarship. This includes advocating for programs that advance equity, fostering an inclusive climate for faculty, staff, and students, and affirming the importance of academic freedom in research and teaching. The Dean must be a visible and vocal advocate, supporting programs that advance diversity, carefully considering equity commitments during budget cuts, and navigating campus politics with courage and clarity. Their leadership will signal UCSC's unwavering dedication to its values, inspire confidence, and strengthen the Division's reputation as a national leader in social justice.

Expand Fundraising and Strategic Partnerships

With [Inspiring Change: The Campaign for UC Santa Cruz](#) entering the public phase, the next Dean will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Social Sciences through philanthropy and partnerships. By articulating a compelling vision that highlights the Division's distinctive strengths—such as sustainability, social justice, and interdisciplinary research—the Dean can attract transformative investments. In addition to traditional fundraising, the Dean will cultivate collaborations with industry, government, and nonprofit organizations to expand resources and create new opportunities for students and faculty. This is a chance to position Social Sciences as a hub of innovation and impact, supported by a network of engaged partners. Success in this area will require time, creativity, persistence, and the ability to tell the Division's story in ways that inspire investment and collaboration.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Basic Qualifications

- Demonstrated academic administrative leadership (e.g., Department Chair, Institute or Center Director).
- National or international distinction as a scholar, or researcher/practitioner with a record necessary for a position as a tenured full professor in the Division of the Social Sciences, i.e., an outstanding record of scholarly achievement, teaching, and service.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience fostering interdisciplinary research and education, including the development of new programs.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with administrators, faculty, students, and staff in an environment of shared governance.
- Appreciation for the mission and responsibilities of a public R1 university serving a multi-ethnic state and a demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion.
- Demonstrated success in fundraising and securing external support.
- Ability to cultivate and develop positive relations with internal and external constituents, including alumni, members of the community, businesses, and donors, locally and beyond.

The Dean position is covered by Academic Personnel Policies, including UC systemwide policy and UCSC campus academic personnel policies, including APM 240: Deans and UCSC campus-wide policy CAPM 300.240: Academic Deans.

Special Conditions of Employment

- Work hours beyond the standard 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. workday. Travel (both inside and outside of normal business hours) is required.
- Successful background check.
- Financial disclosure requirements of the California Reform Act of 1974.
- Annual disclosure of outside professional activities.
- Mandatory trainings as required by the University of California.
- Per the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA), this position has been identified as a Mandated Reporter. The selected candidate will be required to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect as defined by CANRA and will be required to sign a Statement Acknowledging Requirement to Report Child Abuse prior to commencing employment.

About the Social Sciences Division

Overview

The [Social Sciences Division](#) at UC Santa Cruz is the University's largest academic division, founded in 1965 alongside the campus. It is a vibrant, interdisciplinary community committed to addressing complex social and environmental challenges through research, teaching, and public engagement. The Division champions the public value of social sciences, emphasizing social justice, sustainability, equity, and innovation. It awards approximately 40% of all UCSC undergraduate degrees, enrolls over 38,000 course registrations annually, and secures approximately \$40 million in extramural research funding each year.

With eight departments, four interdisciplinary undergraduate programs, and 33 undergraduate and graduate degree offerings, the Division emphasizes inclusive, personalized learning and prepares students for impactful careers. Research initiatives focus on climate change and sustainability, inequality, and social justice, pairing critical inquiry with practical solutions. The Division is unique in its formal ties to residential colleges, College Nine (global perspectives), and John R. Lewis College (justice and community). It is nationally recognized for equitable research methods and student engagement.

Mission

The Division strives to:

- Advance equity-centered education and research.
- Challenge problematic narratives and institutions.
- Generate insights that shift public discourse toward justice and sustainability.
- Foster inclusive, collaborative, and caring practices. Its work reflects UCSC's broader mission to lead at the intersection of innovation and social justice, preparing students to become engaged global Academics.

Anthropology

The Anthropology Department explores what it means to be human through an integrative approach that spans cultural anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology. Faculty and students investigate human diversity from our species' origins to contemporary societies, addressing issues such as race, health, environment, and colonial power relations. The department offers a B.A. major and minor, as well as a Ph.D. program with three tracks emphasizing ethnographic practice, archaeological research, and biogenetic analysis. Students gain hands-on experience through fieldwork, laboratory courses, and global study opportunities. Research is deeply committed to social justice and examines pressing challenges, such as climate change and inequality, through evolutionary, sociocultural, and biogenetic lenses.

Coastal Science and Policy

The Coastal Science and Policy Program, offered jointly with the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences, trains future leaders to design and implement interdisciplinary solutions to sustainability challenges in coastal zones worldwide. It offers a Master of Science degree and a Ph.D. designated emphasis for UCSC doctoral students. The program emphasizes systems thinking, equity, and practical problem-solving through project-based learning and partnerships with government, NGOs, and industry. Students develop expertise in areas such as

coastal resilience, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, fisheries, and environmental justice. With a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, the program prepares graduates for impactful careers in science, policy, and advocacy, addressing urgent global issues at the intersection of ecology, economy, and society.

Community Studies

Founded in 1969, Community Studies is UCSC's oldest interdisciplinary program and a national pioneer in experiential education and social justice pedagogy. The B.A. in Community Studies integrates classroom learning with a distinctive six-month, full-time field study, where students work with organizations focused on health equity, economic justice, and other social change missions. The curriculum examines the histories and strategies of social movements, nonprofit organizations, and public policy, while equipping students with skills in social analysis and community engagement. Faculty are activist-scholars committed to mentoring students who aspire to careers in advocacy, public service, and leadership. Alumni include prominent figures in public health, education, and grassroots organizing, reflecting the program's enduring impact on social transformation.

Economics

The Economics Department combines rigorous theoretical training with applied research to address critical economic issues, from global trade and finance to inequality and development. It offers four undergraduate majors: Economics, Business Management Economics, Global Economics, and Economics/Mathematics, along with a minor, an M.S. in Quantitative Economics and Finance, and a Ph.D. program. Faculty research spans applied microeconomics, macroeconomics, finance, behavioral economics, and econometrics, often using cutting-edge empirical methods such as randomized experiments and big data analytics. The department emphasizes social mobility and prepares students for careers in academia, government, and industry, with alumni excelling in leadership roles across sectors.

Education

The Education Department is dedicated to transforming learning and advancing equity through research, teacher preparation, and community engagement. Its programs include the B.A. in Education, Democracy, and Justice, two minors (general and STEM), a combined bachelor's/master's pathway, an M.A. with a California teaching credential, and a Ph.D. program. Coursework and field experiences emphasize the intersections of education with social justice, cultural and linguistic diversity, and democratic values. Faculty research addresses systemic inequities and promotes inclusive pedagogies, preparing graduates for roles as teachers, policymakers, and educational leaders committed to improving opportunities for historically marginalized communities.

Environmental Studies

The Environmental Studies Department approaches sustainability challenges as socio-ecological problems requiring interdisciplinary solutions. It offers B.A. degrees in Environmental Studies and Agroecology, combined majors with biology and economics, an M.A. in Geographic Information Systems, and a Ph.D. program. Students engage in experiential learning through internships, field courses, and research on topics such as conservation, climate change, food systems, and environmental justice. Faculty integrate natural and social sciences to produce actionable insights for biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture. Graduates pursue careers in policy, law, restoration ecology, and environmental advocacy, often becoming leaders in sustainability initiatives worldwide.

Global and Community Health

Launched in 2022, the Global and Community Health Program, which is jointly offered with the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences, addresses health equity and justice through an interdisciplinary lens, bridging sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts. It offers both B.A. and B.S. degrees, preparing students for careers in medicine, public health, policy, and advocacy. The B.A. emphasizes social, cultural, and policy dimensions of health, while the B.S. includes biomedical and public health concentrations. Students engage in experiential learning through internships and a capstone “Task Force” course, collaborating on solutions to real-world health challenges. Faculty research connects global health lessons with local needs, fostering partnerships that advance health equity. Graduates are equipped for diverse roles in healthcare, research, and community-based organizations, grounded in UCSC’s commitment to social justice.

Latin American and Latino Studies

Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS) is an interdisciplinary department that examines the interconnected histories, cultures, and politics of Latin American and Latinx communities across the Americas. It offers a B.A. major and minor, combined majors with Politics, Sociology, and Education, and a pioneering Ph.D. program, the first globally to link Latin American and Latino studies. Faculty research addresses migration, inequality, race, gender, social movements, and environmental justice, fostering activist scholarship and community engagement. Students gain analytical and practical skills through internships and field studies, preparing for careers in education, public policy, law, journalism, and advocacy. The department’s mission reflects UCSC’s identity as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and its commitment to equity and social transformation.

Legal Studies

The Legal Studies Program at UC Santa Cruz is one of the oldest and largest interdisciplinary law and justice programs in the UC system. Housed within the Politics Department, it offers a B.A. major and minor that explore the foundations, functions, and impacts of law in the U.S. and globally. The curriculum spans theory, public law, and law-and-society perspectives, drawing on courses from across the social sciences, humanities, and arts. Students examine issues such as civil rights, immigration, environmental law, and systemic injustice, while developing critical thinking and analytical skills. Experiential learning is central, with opportunities for internships, field studies, and participation in programs in Washington, DC, Sacramento, and abroad. Graduates pursue careers in law, public policy, advocacy, and nonprofit leadership, equipped with a broad understanding of legal systems and their societal implications.

Politics

The Politics Department investigates power, governance, and justice through an inclusive lens that extends beyond traditional political science. Its programs include a B.A. major and minor, a combined major with LALS, and a Ph.D. program. Students study democracy, authoritarianism, social movements, and global politics, with opportunities for experiential learning through internships in Washington, DC, Sacramento, and abroad. Faculty research emphasizes critical and interpretive approaches to political economy, institutions, and discourse, aiming to expose and reform unjust policies. The department also houses the Legal Studies Program, which focuses on law and society. Graduates pursue careers in law, government, NGOs, and academia, equipped to be reflective and active citizens.

Psychology

The Psychology Department explores cognitive, developmental, and social processes in real-world contexts, emphasizing diversity and social justice. It offers B.A. degrees in Psychology (general and intensive tracks), a

B.S. in Cognitive Science, and a Ph.D. program in three subfields: cognitive, developmental, and social psychology. Faculty employ interdisciplinary methods, including behavioral experiments, neuroscience, and qualitative research, to study topics such as perception, memory, identity, and group dynamics. Students gain research experience through labs and field studies, preparing for careers in research, technology, education, and health-related fields. The department's commitment to equity is reflected in its curriculum and outreach initiatives.

Sociology

The Sociology Department examines social structures, inequalities, and transformative possibilities through a critical, interdisciplinary lens. It offers a B.A. major, a minor, a Digital Justice Studies concentration, and a Ph.D. program. Faculty research spans political economy, cultural politics, law, social movements, and science and technology studies, employing diverse methodologies from ethnography to quantitative analysis. Students engage in experiential learning through the Everett Program and Community Studies, applying technology and organizing strategies for social change. Graduates pursue careers in academia, public policy, advocacy, and community development, driven by the department's vision of a just and equitable society.

Divisional Research Centers

Research units within the Social Sciences Division are hubs for cutting-edge inquiry and innovation. They provide funding support and a collaborative environment for faculty, students, and community partners to work together on addressing crucial issues that will shape the course of our collective future.

- [Institute for Social Transformation](#)
- [Archaeological Research Center \(ARC\)](#)
- [Campus + Community \(C+C\)](#)
- [Center for Agroecology](#)
- [Center for Analytical Finance](#)
- [Center for Critical Urban and Environmental Studies](#)
- [Center for Economic Justice and Action](#)
- [Center for Integrated Spatial Research](#)
- [Center for Labor and Community](#)
- [Center for Statistical Analysis in the Social Sciences](#)
- [Dolores Huerta Research Center for the Americas](#)
- [Kenneth S. Norris Center for Natural History](#)
- [Right Livelihood Center](#)
- [Science and Justice Research Center](#)



About UC Santa Cruz

A global research university, UC Santa Cruz is part of the world's most celebrated system of public higher education and stands among the leading institutions of higher learning.

The campus rests among redwood forests on former ranchlands above the city of Santa Cruz and the Pacific Ocean—both of which provide opportunities for study, research, and recreation.

UC Santa Cruz invites students to find their voice at a place that is not just a location, but a community of learning that spans the globe.

- 17,366 Undergraduate students
- 1,888 Graduate students
- 19,254 Entire student body
- 74 Undergraduate majors
- 66 Graduate programs
- 93% California residents (undergraduates)

Get More Facts - Achievements, Facts, and Figures

Overview

UC Santa Cruz—acclaimed for [high-impact research](#) and a [commitment to teaching and public service](#)—leads at the intersection of innovation, social justice, and sustainability.

Known for impactful research, teaching, and public service, UC Santa Cruz leads at the intersection of innovation, social justice, and sustainability. Nearly 20,000 students are enrolled at UC Santa Cruz in undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs.

Located in and around a redwood forest overlooking the Monterey Bay, UC Santa Cruz is widely considered to be one of the most beautiful college campuses in the world. The campus includes three sites in Santa Cruz: a 2,000-acre residential campus, the [Westside Research Park](#), and the [Coastal Science Campus](#). UC Santa Cruz also manages seven [natural reserves](#) and the Silicon Valley campus, which provide locations for learning and experimentation.

Mission

As a preeminent public research university, UC Santa Cruz transforms California and the world through groundbreaking discoveries, creative scholarship, public service, and an inclusive student-centered learning environment that empowers students to become engaged global leaders.

Vision

At UC Santa Cruz, we aspire to lead at the intersection of innovation and social justice. By challenging conventional thinking through our collaborative interdisciplinary approach and distinction as an inclusive learning environment, we will advance the spectrum of knowledge and develop sustainable solutions to the challenges of our time.

Social justice and environmental sustainability are critical to the collective future of humankind and our planet, and we will continue to work tirelessly to advance these ideals. Our work will transcend our university to produce contributions and solutions through collaborations and community partnerships that advance knowledge and transform California and the world.

We will be recognized broadly for our areas of research excellence and their impact, known for our advancements in core disciplines and exploration at their intersections. Our approach to research and creative scholarship will enhance the faculty community and enrich the undergraduate experience through mentorship, research, and experiential learning opportunities. We will advance graduate program excellence to develop, mentor, and prepare future generations of scholars, researchers, practitioners, and leaders. Our world-renowned research clusters and programs will make UC Santa Cruz the destination of choice for faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars.

We will provide a student-centered learning experience for our undergraduate and graduate students. Our teaching and learning will be enhanced by a culture of inclusion, respect, and agency, the open exchange of ideas, and the strength and perspectives that emerge from a diverse community of scholars. Advanced by our distinctive residential college system and approach to the holistic student experience, we will help our students develop their skills in critical thinking, inquiry, and analysis through inclusive teaching approaches, mentoring, hands-on learning opportunities, and support programs for students from all backgrounds.

Academics

Leading at the intersection of innovation, social justice, and sustainability, the UC Santa Cruz campus community members use their voices, knowledge, and talents to create real change.

Disciplines

The UC Santa Cruz student experience fuses high-level academics with passionate engagement in the world. Here, you learn by doing, and the University is routinely ranked among the top universities for research excellence and impact.

- [Arts](#)
- [Humanities](#)
- [Social Sciences](#)
- [Sciences](#)
- [Baskin School Of Engineering](#)
- [Graduate Studies](#)

Colleges

All undergraduate students choose one of 10 colleges as their living/learning community. Each college is like its own “neighborhood,” complete with traditions and history, academic support, activities, and events.

- [Cowell College](#)
- [Crown College](#)
- [John R. Lewis College](#)
- [Kresge College](#)
- [Merrill College](#)
- [College Nine](#)
- [Oakes College](#)
- [Porter College](#)
- [Rachel Carson College](#)
- [Stevenson College](#)

Leadership

Chancellor Cynthia K. Larive



As the 11th chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, Cynthia Larive leads an institution known worldwide for its interdisciplinary approach to research for the public good, for seeking solutions and giving voice to the challenges of our time, and for its commitment to social and environmental justice.

A common thread throughout Larive's career has been her commitment to student success, inclusion, and equity. Upon her arrival at UC Santa Cruz in 2019, Larive set out to achieve many goals for the campus, chief among them improving graduation rates and eliminating graduation gaps for low-income and first-generation students, and for students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

An accomplished bioanalytical chemist, Larive is also focused on research, innovation, and developing the next generation of entrepreneurs.

[Read more about Chancellor Larive.](#)

Interim Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Paul Koch



Paul Koch is UC Santa Cruz's Interim Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor (CP/EVC). He is the University's chief academic officer and oversees all academic divisions, UCSC Extension, and the University Library, ensuring that campus resources support the University's academic mission and strategic priorities. He is the primary liaison with UCSC's Academic Senate.

[Interim Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Paul Koch.](#)



Santa Cruz, California

The Santa Cruz area is a place of inspiring natural beauty. Picture-perfect scenes surround the campus and the town: the vast Pacific Ocean, primeval stands of redwood forests, majestic mountains, and rows of fresh farmland. But it is also a convenient, modern place to live with good shopping and amenities, as well as its own personality and culture.

Santa Cruz has long been a place that embraces individuality. Jack O'Neill, who is credited with inventing the wetsuit, built his global business here. The idea that launched media titan Netflix happened in downtown Santa Cruz, and the business launched in nearby Scotts Valley.

Santa Cruz is a small coastal city of about 60,000 people. Its laid-back Surf City atmosphere and world-famous Beach Boardwalk amusement park are augmented by the globally recognized Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, a vibrant symphonic and independent music scene, a burgeoning tech ecosystem, cutting-edge genomics companies, and a lively downtown retail experience.

Come live and learn with us in this gorgeous place!

For a complete visitor guide, including information on accommodations, dining, activities, and more, see the [Visit Santa Cruz County](#) homepage.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as two separate documents, a CV or resume, and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting UC Santa Cruz in this search. For full consideration, candidate materials should be received by March 9, 2026.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Suzanne Teer, Alejandra Gillette-Teran, and Sarah Seavey

UCSCDeanSocSci@wittkieffer.com

The budgeted salary range that the University reasonably expects to pay for this position is \$345,000 to \$385,000. Please visit [UCnet](#) to learn about the benefits of working at UC.

Misconduct Disclosure Requirement

As a condition of employment, the final candidate who accepts a conditional offer of employment will be required to disclose if they have been subject to any final administrative or judicial decisions within the last seven years determining that they committed any misconduct; received notice of any allegations or are currently the subject of any administrative or disciplinary proceedings involving misconduct; have left a position after receiving notice of allegations or while under investigation in an administrative or disciplinary proceeding involving misconduct; or have filed an appeal of a finding of misconduct with a previous employer.

"Misconduct" means any violation of the policies or laws governing conduct at the applicant's previous place of employment, including, but not limited to, violations of policies or laws prohibiting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other forms of harassment, discrimination, dishonesty, or unethical conduct, as defined by the employer. For reference, below are UC's policies addressing some forms of misconduct:

- [UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [UC Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Abusive Conduct in the Workplace](#)

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the [UC Anti-Discrimination Policy](#).

It is the policy of the University of California to undertake affirmative action and anti-discrimination efforts, consistent with its obligations as a Federal and State contractor.