



ANNUAL REPORT

2013 – 14

COMMUNITY MAKES RESEARCH MATTER

UC Merced Resource Center for  
Community Engaged  
Scholarship





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# Directors' Message

Even before UC Merced officially opened its doors in the San Joaquin Valley, the under-resourced region was looking to us for solutions to complex economic, environmental and social challenges. Chancellor Carol Tomlinson-Keasey's early Community Pledge sent a clear message that our university was committed to serving the region through teaching, research and service. In 2006, upon starting as assistant professor of anthropology, Robin DeLugan was brought into a network of San Joaquin Valley leaders and faculty from UC Berkeley and UC Davis who supported UC Merced's goal of serving the region through collaborative, community engaged research. That network, CURAJ (Community University Research and Action for Justice) continues to serve as an inspiration for the Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES).

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ReCCES continues to explore creative ways of linking our campus research mission to regional needs.

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With support from Chancellor SungMo "Steve" Kang in 2008, a team from UC Merced (Maria Pallavicini, Jorge Aguilar, Robin DeLugan and Steve Roussos) was selected to attend a charrette with leading proponents of community engaged scholarship in the United States, sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). Though we were the "new kids on the block," all participants looked to us to illustrate how a research-intensive university can support and promote community engaged research.

A grant from The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative (2011-2013) funded our early efforts to build an infrastructure to support faculty and student community engaged scholarship.

In Fall 2013, our successful proposal for a UC Merced Blum Center for Developing Economies emphasized our region (and global analogs). With the motto "Transforming poverty to prosperity," the UC Merced Blum Center emphasizes community-inspired innovation. ReCCES is key to our Blum Center goals, and both of us endeavor to make both ReCCES and the Blum Center signatures for our commitment to the region.

ReCCES continues to explore creative ways of linking our campus research mission to regional needs. We introduce faculty and community leaders around common interests and concerns and endeavor to build the capacity of both campus and community to collaborate in mutually beneficial research.

We are satisfied with our accomplishments in AY 2013-14 as outlined in this annual report.

ROBIN DELUGAN AND STEVE ROUSSOS, *Co-Directors*

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# What is Community Engaged Scholarship (CES)?

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Community engaged scholarship is an approach to education, research and service that supports rigorous academic goals and benefits the community. Through mutually beneficial collaborations between academic and community partners, CES produces effective research that contributes to community goals.

## Background

Originally established as the Chancellor's Task Force on Community Engaged Scholarship in 2009, the Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES) was inaugurated in 2013 as an institutional fixture at UC Merced. ReCCES serves as a centralized resource to build and strengthen an infrastructure to facilitate community engaged scholarship (CES) at UC Merced. Supported over the years by campus leadership and faculty, ReCCES has been an active force to make CES a distinguishing feature of UC Merced and connect the research mission of the UC to community engagement.

Since its inception, ReCCES has identified hundreds of community engaged scholars across the University of California system; hosted three conferences bringing community leaders and researchers together from across the region; offered numerous workshops to train community engaged scholars; developed a community advisory board to facilitate CES at UC Merced; and provided an orientation for new faculty and graduate students to the principles of CES. We conduct a survey at the annual Cap and Town celebration as part of our effort to gauge the broader community's understanding of the value of having a research university in the region. ReCCES strives to be the go-to unit on campus for bringing academic researchers and community collaborators together.

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# Major Accomplishments

## At a Glance: AY 2013-14

- › Completed application to earn UC Merced the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Community Engagement Classification
- › Helped attract UCOP funds and campus funds to establish UC Merced's Blum Center for Developing Economies (\$400,000)
- › Brought in UCOP Opportunity Grant to conduct a UC systemwide survey of community engaged scholars (\$20,000)
- › Awarded more than \$11,000 to faculty conducting community engaged research projects
- › Conducted UC-systemwide survey of faculty and administrators to evaluate the infrastructure in place to support community engaged scholarship
- › Hosted monthly workshop series for community engaged researchers
- › Expanded and published a model for core competencies for community and academic partners collaborating in community engaged research



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# Building Infrastructure to Support CES

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## UCOP-Funded Study of Community Engaged Scholarship at the University of California

In Spring 2013, the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) awarded ReCCES a \$20,000 Opportunity Fund grant to understand and improve support for community engaged scholarship (CES) across the UC system. A detailed survey was distributed to faculty and staff who identify as community engaged researchers at each of the 10 UC campuses to assess the infrastructure in place for CES. More than 400 participants shared their experiences. In Fall 2013, Robin DeLugan and Steve Roussos presented preliminary findings from the survey at each campus within the UC system to develop recommendations for how to establish CES as an integral part of the system. These campus gatherings were often the first time that faculty interacted with colleagues who share the same interest in CES, and as such, the visits provided important networking opportunities on campuses and between campuses.

The survey results highlighted several areas on which the University of California can concentrate its efforts to increase the infrastructure supporting CES. Key findings include the perception that first and foremost, CES is of importance to communities and to graduate students, and then to faculty. However, across all 10 campuses, faculty responses question whether CES is of importance to senior campus leadership, development, communications, regents and other UC administrators. The support of these stakeholders is essential for creating a campus system that recognizes and rewards community engaged scholarship. As a strong proponent of CES, ReCCES has been invited to speak at various UC events to lead discussions on how these findings can be used to build an infrastructure within the UC system to support CES. An article based on the results from the study is currently being prepared for publication.

## Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification

Beginning in May 2013, Robin DeLugan organized a steering committee with representatives from across campus to gather data that resulted in UC Merced's successful application for the 2015 Carnegie Elective Community Engagement Classification. This prestigious classification garners national recognition for university and college campuses at the vanguard of integrating community engagement as part of their mission. The opportunity to apply for the award comes around once every five years. The application process entailed an intensive, comprehensive assessment of community engagement across the institution. Data was collected from various departments and programs across UC Merced. The process identified many of the ways in which



UC Merced and the surrounding region have formed close partnerships and will serve to strengthen ties between UC Merced and our local communities. The Carnegie classification highlights and reaffirms UC Merced's commitment to form equitable, mutually beneficial collaborations with communities to uphold the UC standard of excellence in research, teaching and service.

On January 7, 2015, it was announced that UC Merced earned the classification. A press release can be viewed here. <http://www.ucmerced.edu/news/2015/campusgainsnationalrecognitioncommunityengagement>

## New UC Merced Blum Center for Developing Economies

ReCCES was integral to a successful proposal for UCOP funds (\$400,000) and campus funds (\$200,000) to create the UC Merced Blum Center for Developing Economies. The Blum Center at UC Merced is part of the systemwide, 10-campus Blum Federation to end global poverty through the power of UC research and education. Blum Center programs identify, develop and implement scalable and sustainable innovations against poverty in emerging and developing economies. At UC Merced, the Blum Center will focus on research and educational programs that benefit our immediate region (the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills) with extensions to global analogs. ReCCES will serve as the primary vehicle for community engaged research for the Blum Center at UC Merced.

## CES Recognized in Faculty Portfolios for Promotion and Tenure

Over the last few decades, there has been increasing national recognition among prestigious grantors and leading institutions of higher education of the value in community-academic collaborations to solve some of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century. Faculty, administrators, foundations and community organizations across the country have been calling for the inclusion of community engaged scholarship as criterion in promotion and tenure policies to encourage and support scholarly community-faculty collaborations. As part of this nationwide shift in refining promotion and tenure policies, ReCCES is working closely with Academic Personnel to define and incorporate criteria for faculty community engagement as part of UC Merced's Digital Measures, an online database for faculty members to track and report their scholarly activities and maintain an updated portfolio. UC Merced faculty members will soon be able to integrate their community engaged research into their academic portfolios to highlight the full extent of their activities as a scholar.

# Supporting Community Engaged Scholars

## FUNDING

### Faculty Seed Grants

In Spring 2014, ReCCES awarded seed grants to three research collaborations between UC Merced faculty and local community partners. Each project addresses challenges salient to the Central Valley, including reducing teen pregnancy and improving the well-being of foster children and youth who have faced significant hardship throughout their childhood. Allocating funds to support community engaged scholarship is critical to provide scholars with adequate resources for their research.

### Graduate Student Awards

Each year in collaboration with the Graduate Division and participating graduate groups, ReCCES coordinates awards for graduate students conducting community engaged research projects. A community engaged graduate scholar is selected from a pool of applicants from each graduate group, and funds are used to support students to enable them to focus on their collaborative research. In

Spring 2014, ReCCES administered two graduate student awards. ReCCES seeks to expand the infrastructure supporting CES at UC Merced by providing funds, trainings and workshops to encourage and enable scholars to participate in CES.

## OUTREACH

### New Faculty and Graduate Student Orientations

At the beginning of each academic year, ReCCES participates in new faculty and graduate student orientations to provide incoming researchers with information on ways to connect with the local region and to offer support for those interested in community engaged scholarship.

Throughout the year, ReCCES provides a contact person to facilitate collaborations between researchers and the local community; creates opportunities for community engaged scholars to network and meet with community members and students interested in community research projects; hosts trainings and workshops to share best practices in CES; and offers consultations to discuss faculty members' ideas and interests for CES.

### Undergraduate Student Engagement

Orienting undergraduate students early to the importance of research can be pivotal in shaping their future success as scholars and community members. ReCCES participates in Bobcat Day and the ASCEND Conference to explain to incoming students the relevance of and need for research. ReCCES informs students of on- and off-campus opportunities to gain community engaged research experience and encourages students of all levels and majors to become involved to hone their ability to think critically and problem-solve issues that matter to the region and their communities.

### Research Week 2014: Community Research Reception

In 2013, ReCCES organized its first downtown Community Research Reception as part of UC Merced's Research Week. In 2014, ReCCES hosted its second annual Community Research Reception at the Merced Civic Center. This reception is open to the public and



features a research poster gallery that showcases research taking place at UC Merced. In addition, presentations by community-academic research teams illustrated ongoing CES research collaborations. Presentation highlights included research conducted by UC Merced graduate student Paul Carroll in collaboration with high school principal Carrie Harkreader on the implementation and impacts of restorative justice in the local public school system. In addition, Nancy Young-Bergman and Don Bergman presented their recently launched program, Produce On the Go, which brings fresh produce to disadvantaged communities in Merced County and promotes healthy living. Susana Ramirez, UC Merced professor of public health, is conducting research on the effectiveness of the program and its communication to the public.

The Community Research Reception provides an opportunity for community members to learn about the wide array of research occurring at UC Merced. The research poster gallery remained on

display at the Merced Civic Center for the following week in commemoration of UC Merced's Research Week.

### Geospatial Summit (Co-Sponsor)

Each year, ReCCES participates in bringing together numerous stakeholders from across the region to discuss the application of geographic information systems (GIS) to understand and address local, regional and statewide concerns. In Spring 2014, in collaboration with RuthAnne Harbison, the city of Merced's GIS Coordinator, ReCCES co-sponsored and co-coordinated UC Merced's fourth annual Geospatial Summit Conference. This full-day event, which was themed "GIS: Integrating Your Community, World, Life," brought together more than 100 state and regional GIS experts, community members, educators, graduate students and faculty using GIS. A diverse panel of featured speakers shared their work and research using the latest in GIS technology. This conference was co-sponsored by the Spatial Analysis and Research Center (SpARC), city of Merced,

CGIA, CentralCal URISA, NorCal URISA, and UC Merced's Blum Center, Health Sciences Research Institute (HSRI), and Sierra Nevada Research Institute (SNRI).

## NETWORKING

### IdeaShare Series

In Fall 2013, ReCCES launched IdeaShare, a monthly open forum for UC Merced faculty, staff, graduate students and community partners to discuss, collaborate and network around the topic of CES. IdeaShare provides an opportunity to connect experienced and prospective community engaged researchers to share best practices and create a support network for CES at UC Merced. Each discussion centers on a different theme, such as how to begin community engaged research, how to find funding for CES, and best practices in disseminating CES. Topics are pre-determined based on input from the campus community, and IdeaShare continues to evolve to support and expand the network of community engaged scholars at UC Merced.

# Identifying Best Practices in CES



PROFESSOR ROBIN DELUGAN IN OUANAMINTHE, HAITI, THIS SUMMER. OUANAMINTHE IS AT THE BORDER BETWEEN HAITI AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND WAS THE SITE OF A 1937 MASSACRE OF HAITIANS ORDERED BY DOMINICAN DICTATOR RAFAEL TRUJILLO.

## UC Merced Library Faculty Spotlight: Robin DeLugan

The UC Merced Library featured an exhibit highlighting the significant contributions ReCCES co-director Robin DeLugan has made as a scholar, community engaged researcher, professor, and social justice activist. Since coming to UC Merced in 2006, DeLugan has been a leading figure in promoting community engagement efforts at UC Merced and throughout the Central Valley. She has served as a co-chair of Community University Research and Action for Justice (CURAJ), a member of the governing council for the Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California (CCREC), and a co-founder of ReCCES, in addition to leading multiple community engaged research studies and drafting a comprehensive application to earn UC Merced the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement. The library exhibit honored her commitment to academic excellence and her active involvement in connecting UC Merced with the region.

### PUBLICATION:

"Linking Academic and Community Guidelines for Community Engaged Scholarship." (2014). Robin Maria DeLugan, Stergios Roussos, & Geneva Skram. *Journal for Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 18(1): 155-168.

Based on seven years of experience in supporting faculty and community to collaborate in mutually beneficial research in our region, the article provides insights into the requirements for capacity building and institutional support for research universities seeking to promote community engaged scholarship (CES). The article extends a seminal model set forth by Blanchard et al. (2009) and includes guidelines and criteria for community members participating in community engaged research. This model will benefit the quality of community engaged scholarship by clarifying the competencies that are unique to and shared by academic and community stakeholders. The article can be viewed here. <http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/1181>

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# Collaborative Research Projects

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## Cap and Town Community Survey

In May 2014, ReCCES conducted its second annual survey to gauge community members' perceptions of UC Merced at Cap and Town, a yearly community-wide celebration for graduating students hosted by the City of Merced. The majority of Merced County residents surveyed believed that UC Merced has had a beneficial impact on the local community. While UC Merced tends to be viewed positively, our results suggest that the university still has yet to establish itself as an integrated part of the local community. Findings were presented at a Merced City Council meeting and shared with UC Merced administrators. Further consideration of how to bridge the geographic and relational gap between the university and the town is warranted. ReCCES remains dedicated to bringing the campus and the community together through facilitating opportunities for community and academic members to collaborate in research.

## Merced Youth Funding Project

During Academic Year 2013-14, a team of UC Merced undergraduates under the supervision of graduate student Dorie Perez (Interdisciplinary Humanities) and ReCCES co-directors responded to a request from Merced's Building Healthy Communities initiative to provide data on opportunities to increase funding support for Merced youth development. In collaboration with community stakeholders, the research team gathered and summarized secondary data on the challenging realities faced by many local youth; analyzed the budgets of Central Valley cities to gauge the levels of investments cities were making in youth programming and services; and identified exemplary youth programs and services that exist in the region and elsewhere, including an analysis of their budgets and the source of their funding. The results of this research were provided to the community partners and to city officials and provide the base of an ongoing community engaged research project that contributes to understanding how we can invest in our youth.

# Faces of ReCCES



## **Robin Maria DeLugan**

*Co-Director of ReCCES*

Robin DeLugan is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of California, Merced. Her research interests include nation-building and state formation; national identity and social memory; citizenship and civic engagement; and indigeneity. She complements her international research in Latin America (El Salvador and the Dominican Republic) with research focused on Central Valley grassroots efforts to transform inequality in our region. In addition to ReCCES, DeLugan is on the leadership team for UC Merced's Blum Center for Developing Economies. She received her Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley.



## **Stergios Roussos**

*Co-Director of ReCCES*

Stergios Roussos is the interim executive director of the Blum Center for Developing Economies at UC Merced. His current work aims to understand and improve how organizations and community partnerships influence populations-level outcomes, especially outcomes disproportionately affecting vulnerable and under-represented communities. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas and his M.P.H. from the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University.



## **Brittany Oakes**

*Program Assistant*

Brittany Oakes will graduate in Spring 2015 with bachelor's degrees in cognitive science and psychology and a minor in public health. Her research interests include social influences on cognitive and behavioral change, as well as local and national food systems change. Brittany has led multiple student research projects and enjoys volunteering as an active member of the Merced community.

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# ReCCES Advisory Board

## Community Advisory Members:

Steve Gomes, *Superintendent, Merced County Office of Education*

Kathleen Grassi, *Director, Merced County Public Health Department*

Dennis Haines, *Operations Supervisor, Merced County Family Resource Council*

Ruthanne Harbison, *GIS Coordinator, GISP, City of Merced*

Ana Pagan, *Director, Merced County Human Services Agency*

Matilda Soria, *Director, Research and Development, Reading and Beyond (Fresno)*

Michelle Symes, *Categorical Coordinator, Merced County Office of Education*

Nancy Young-Bergman, Ph.D., *Management Consultant*

## UC Merced Advisory Members:

Jorge Aguilar, *Associate Vice Chancellor, Center for Educational Partnerships (Fresno)*

Katherine Brokaw, *Assistant Professor of English Literature, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Christopher Butler, *Assistant Director, Engineering Service Learning, School of Engineering*

Linda Cameron, *Professor of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Elliott Campbell, *Associate Professor of Engineering, School of Engineering*

Paul Carroll, Ph.D. *Candidate in Health Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Vernette Doty, *Associate Director of Student Life*

Tanya Golash-Boza, *Associate Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Cori Lucero, *Executive Director, Office of Governmental and Community Relations*

Amy Moffat, *Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Susana Ramirez, *Assistant Professor of Public Health, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Samuel Traina, *Vice Chancellor for Research, Office of Research*

Zulema Valdez, *Associate Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

Jan Wallander, *Professor of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts*

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