

## EQUITY & INCLUSION INNOVATION GRANTS

### Berkeley's Innovation Incubator for Equity and Inclusion

Since 2010, Berkeley's Equity & Inclusion Innovation Grants program has provided over \$500,000 in funding for 44 projects focused on new and sustainable ways to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity on campus. The Division of Equity & Inclusion developed the program to encourage grassroots creativity, innovation, and experimentation among campus members in addressing both long- and short-term challenges. It provides a dynamic and flexible complement to larger institutional efforts and approaches.

The grants have centered on key areas from Berkeley's strategic plan on equity, inclusion, and diversity. Areas of focus have included curriculum and new program development and the creation of new tools and resources for expanding access, supporting diverse populations, and improving campus climate (e.g. storytelling banks, advising practices, cross-cultural competencies training, and dialogue).

Funding for the first five years of the Innovation Grants program was provided by the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund as part of the Berkeley Initiative for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity.

### Program Highlights, Impact, and Institutionalization

Taken together, the Innovation Grants have enabled unprecedented activity by students, staff, and faculty in critical areas of need and opportunity. This is the first time a "research 1" institution has directly supported student and staff projects in this way. In the first five years of the program, project accomplishments include:

- » Increasing the university's ability to tap new, previously underutilized, or unknown talent pools
- » Providing insights into improvements for advising and academic and community support for underrepresented and undocumented students
- » Developing curriculum and other resources to increase violence prevention and survivor support
- » Creating courses, conferences, symposiums, workshops, and other new ways to engage campus members about understanding difference
- » Offering low-income, first-generation, undocumented, underrepresented, LGBTQ, and other marginalized students new spaces to belong within the university
- » Improving the ability of various units to broaden the talent pools they tap for recruiting, hiring, admission, and advancement
- » Creating a replicable department-based business model that uses internal profits to subsidize the cost of required course materials for low-income students
- » Expanding engaged scholarship and research opportunities for underrepresented students and their communities
- » Developing new leaders skilled in navigating our global, richly diverse society

Not all projects succeed, and that is an integral part of the learning process within innovation incubators. Like all failures, the challenges within Innovation Grants efforts offer important lessons about the ways to move forward. Each year, proposals become more sophisticated, incorporat-

ing greater attention to current research and past experience on the issues being addressed. Proposals have also expanded partnerships across campus and with community leaders and leadership development opportunities within the project structure, leading to greater impact and increased likelihood of sustainability. Interest in the Innovation Grants program is high and growing. Every grant cycle, the Division of Equity & Inclusion receives many more requests than can be supported with available resources.

Of the 30 projects funded through 2014, 20 have produced sustainable mechanisms for ongoing activity. This percentage of sustainability is unusually high for this type of innovation process, particularly when compared with innovation in the business sector. Moving forward, 14 new projects have received funding for the 2015/2016 academic year, all focused on improving the ways in which students, faculty, and staff are welcomed, supported, and provided a safe community environment at Berkeley.

See “Fitness Test: Inclusion Builds Strength” on page 48 for a profile of one Innovation Grant project and the descriptions of Berkeley’s Undocumented Student Program on page 53 and Veterans Services Program on page 54 for examples of groups that have drawn on Innovation Grants to further their development.

In addition, some of the most significant campuswide outcomes from the first five years of the Innovation Grants program include:

- » The norming of accessible wellness, fitness, and athletics, across the campus. One of our early Innovation Grants has allowed for reshaping the way that fitness spaces and programs are designed and has helped integrate students, faculty, staff, and community members with disabilities into fitness and sports in groundbreaking ways. This includes the first competitive goalball team for blind athletes and new academic research on disability and fitness/athletics by the Graduate School of Education’s Cultural Studies of Sports Education program. An unexpected byproduct of this norming of accessibility has been the creation of gender-neutral bathroom and dressing facilities within Berkeley’s recreational sports facilities. This has opened the doors, quite literally, to transgender campus and community members and others for which gender-specific facilities are not a welcoming or safe environment.
- » Increase in successful graduate school applications for low-income, undocumented, underrepresented, LGBTQ, first-generation, and other marginalized undergraduate students through mentoring and academic and community support. This not only impacts the faculty and other professional talent pools of the future, but also alters the landscape of academia by providing what are often new perspectives on age-old disciplines.
- » Increased tools and resources on violence prevention and disruption for first responders and professional caretakers as well as for bystanders, survivors, and potential targets of violence. Several projects have provided increased support for reporting incidences to those previously expressing a lack of comfort or safety with campus reporting mechanisms, improved support for domestic violence survivors, and “truth and reconciliation” mechanisms such as restorative justice circles for students on and off the campus.

Looking ahead, the Division of Equity & Inclusion is eager to continue the Innovation Grants program that has proven to be a popular and successful model for spurring creativity, broad engagement, and collaboration. The Division of Equity & Inclusion will be seeking future funding from both campus and extramural sources.