BLUM CENTER FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Established during UCI's 50th year, the mission of the Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation is to mobilize the vast stock of ingenuity and concern on campus to address the complex challenge of sustainable poverty alleviation through educational programs, basic and applied research, and direct engagement with both policy and community development activities at home and abroad.

The Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation was founded as part of a system-wide consortium that began with the Blum Center for Developing Economies at UC Berkeley, and now includes all ten of the University of California campuses. This federation of Blum Centers is united by the idea that world-class universities must play a leadership role in tackling the world's most daunting challenge – poverty.

UCI's Blum Center is developing innovative courses to introduce students to the challenges of poverty in the 21st century, and to provide them with opportunities to make meaningful contributions to alleviating poverty at home and abroad. The Center's flagship online undergraduate course on poverty will launch in Winter 2017 and will be made available UC-wide. A key element of the Blum Center's approach to education is to enable service learning and field experiences linked to faculty research programs. In Spring 2015, four students participated in trial immersive field study experiences in St. Louis, MO; University, MS; and Anaheim, CA and gained invaluable insights through their participation in poverty-focused projects and programs. This immersion program will be expanded over the next two years, with La Paz, Mexico as an initial next site.

The Center also supports pioneering, interdisciplinary research to develop human-centered, contextually sensitive and sustainable solutions to poverty that draw upon the campus' expertise in areas such as financial inclusion; IT innovation; water, energy and food efficiency; development engineering; risk management; and emergency medicine. We are cultivating long-term partnerships in Southern California and locations around the world, so that our engagement with vulnerable communities and those in need will be co-designed in ways that are ethical, enduring, and effective.

In this spirit, the Designing Solutions for Poverty Competition was established in 2014. It builds on the success of Big Ideas @ Berkeley, one of the oldest university-based student idea contests. The inaugural competition attracted over 30 entries, with five finalists selected by a panel of OC entrepreneurs and faculty. The competition will be expanded this year, in collaboration with UCI's Blackstone Launchpad and UCI Applied Innovation, into a rigorous, year-long process that will prepare students to compete at multiple levels in the UC system.

The student internship program piloted in 2014 has been formalized into the Blum Ambassadors Council. The Council functions as the student association of the Center, attracting the brightest student leaders passionate about poverty action. Ambassadors are integral to the success of the annual Designing Solutions for Poverty Competition, the new online course on global poverty, and *InSight* magazine, the first student-run magazine on poverty at UCI.

The Blum Center for Poverty Alleviation also collaborates with other Blum Centers. For example, in 2015-16 we hosted the first system-wide conference on food security, The Global Food Summit: From Crisis to Security. The two-part conference took place at UCI on November 4, 2015 and May 5-6, 2016, bringing global leaders and practitioners in the food ecosystem together with internationally-recognized academic experts to develop, demonstrate, and disseminate innovative and sustainable solutions to the global food challenges faced around the world.

Key 2016-17 events include: Big Ideas and Designing Solutions Information Session (October 20), Conference on Poverty and Inequality in California (October 28), Poverty Course Launch Event (November 4), Human Security Award (March 8).