



Young people have a lot at stake when it comes to the future of their communities and our democracy as a whole. The COVID-19 pandemic, recent movements for racial justice, and climate disasters have heightened the urgency to ensure that young people play an active, informed role in decision-making processes that have serious consequences for our collective future. The California Freedom Summer (CFS) participatory-action research project will engage UC undergraduate students in understanding and promoting youths' civic leadership.

Through university-community partnerships, CFS will place 100 trained college students as Summer 2022 interns and action researchers in 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations to mentor other young leaders, conduct voter education, and support grassroots campaigns. Students will also host summer regional "Youth Empowerment Conferences" at select UC campuses and for local high school and community college students. Student leaders will also collect, analyze, and disseminate data that contributes to academic research and informs youth-led efforts.

The project includes Winter 2-unit independent study and Spring 2022 Ethnic Studies coursework to prepare UC students for summer internships. Coursework will orient students to the historical, economic, social, and political dynamics shaping outcomes for racially diverse youths, while also equipping them with applied research skills to examine voter outreach and grassroots organizing efforts. Student training will be conducted in coordination with community partners.

CFS is led by Dr. Veronica Terriquez, UCLA Chicano Studies Center Director, and involves the Bunche Center for African-American Studies, the American Indian Studies Center, and the Asian American Center, as well as faculty at other UCs, faculty at community colleges, and public high school teachers.

This program aims to: (1) promote youths' leadership in their own communities; (1) strengthen linkages among high schools, community colleges, and the UC system; (3) enhance the capacity of civic engagement organizations; (4) increase voter turnout in high poverty communities; and (5) contribute to research on youths' civic engagement as their communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students will be selected for the program in December 2021/early January 2022. Those who complete coursework will be considered for an internship during summer 2022. Priority for \$5000 stipend positions will be given to students with prior grassroots organizing or civic engagement experience, as well as those from low-income urban and rural communities. For more information, contact Antonia Izuogu, Fellow at the Bunche Center for African-American Studies at antoniaizuogu@g.ucla.edu.

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