

**University of California, Davis**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE GROUP**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**Spring 2019**

This document is based on CDGG retreats held in Spring 2017 and 2018 and associated surveys as well as Executive Committee discussions during Academic Year 2017-18.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Community Development Graduate Group at the University of California at Davis was founded in the early 1970s and is one of the oldest Community Development graduate programs in the United States. The program embraces the notion that those affected by community change ought to be involved in its conceptualization and implementation. The founding of the Davis degree program initially was in response to community need and the mandate of land grant universities to assist agricultural communities, but the program's emphasis has broadened over the years to encompass the improvement of both urban and rural communities as well as understanding community change in its wider regional and global context.

The CDGG offers a two-year multi-disciplinary applied social science program that leads to a Master of Science degree. The course of study provides a strong theoretical background in Community Development derived from a multi-disciplinary approach that includes Sociology, Anthropology, Political Economy, Geography, Environmental Science, Landscape Architecture, and other social sciences, combining both their theoretical as well as applied aspects.

The program helps students link conceptual knowledge with cutting-edge practical experience so they can influence the social, economic, cultural, and political forces that affect the well-being of people living in community settings anywhere in the world. The combination of theoretical knowledge and applied practical skills is specifically geared towards community development interventions that most effectively support underserved populations.

In spring of 2017, the Community Development Graduate Group (CDGG) began a strategic planning process to provide direction and focus for the program as well as address key areas to strengthen and improve. The CDGG Executive Committee's first step was to develop and distribute a survey to students, faculty, and alumni. Respondents reflected on the CDGG program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and identified critical areas in the core curriculum to expand and enhance. Building upon the survey the Executive Committee identified strengthening and aligning the elements of the core CDGG curriculum as the top priority for the planning process.

Towards this end, the CDGG conducted two strategic planning workshops with students, faculty, staff, and alumni in May and June of 2017. Workshop participants updated the overall CDGG mission and vision, developed program learning objectives,

and brainstormed strategic actions to improve the program's core curriculum, diversity, sense of community, and long-term direction.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The CDGG is a community of transformative scholars building knowledge useful to meet community goals in the context of regional, national and global change. The program emphasizes interdisciplinary, collaborative, and project-based learning, as well as community-engaged scholarship. The CDGG challenges students to integrate theory and practice, to develop constructive solutions to contemporary problems, and to lead in building a healthy, sustainable, and equitable society.

Upon completion of the program, CDGG students will:

- Understand the history of community development and apply theory related to the field
- Develop the capacity to work constructively with institutions and systems of power within communities
- Engage and collaborate with different communities of place, practice, and interest
- Build upon community assets and uniqueness to identify constructive solutions
- Develop skills and knowledge related to their particular interests, such as participatory design, asset-based community development, participatory action research, community economic development, and other skills.

# STRATEGIES AND GOALS

## CURRICULUM

The CDGG curriculum aims to provide students with a mix of courses that allow them to make connections between theory and practice and to build capacity in methods for applied community development research suitable for academic and professional careers. It does this by providing core courses in relevant theory, research design, and professional practice and a set of core electives with a diverse array of topical and disciplinary foci. To ensure that these goals are met, it is necessary to improve the alignment of the courses and the program as a whole, in particular, creating a more cohesive learning experience across the courses and adding new content.

Goal 1: Orient courses and the overall curriculum more specifically around learning objectives

Task 1: Create an ad-hoc committee or task force if necessary (drawing from Executive Committee, those teaching core courses, students, and others) to review and suggest enhancements to the CDGG core courses and overall program.

Task 2: Create CDGG “statement of pedagogy” to lay out expectations of student learning experience and program learning outcomes over the course of the program. The statement can also be shared with faculty creating and refining the core courses. This will be added to the CDGG Handbook. Jonathan and Catherine to draft; finalize in 6 mos period.

Task 3: Align core CDGG curriculum with program learning outcomes. Integrate content across CRD 240, CRD 200, CRD 290, and research design courses. Review syllabi of 240, 200 and research design of the past 5 years, gathering feedback from those who took those classes over that period, finalizing program and course learning objectives, and making recommendations on other curricular changes. 1 year timeframe from university release of data. Executive committee.

Task 4. Include explicit reference to CDGG learning goals in each syllabus and program descriptions. Done by each faculty member; 1 year.

Task 5: Executive committee together with instructors should revisit the design of CRD 240 (Community Development Theory) to include some community/cohort-building activities to help orient and support students in their first quarter. Yearly, in spring quarter before fall quarter.

Task 6: Provide orientation and support for students in CRD 240 to assist in leading discussions and seminar-style learning. Yearly in coordination with instructor; fall quarter. Have instructor emphasize in 240. Establish a point person on the Executive Committee.

Task 7: Executive committee should work with instructor of CRD 200 (Planning for Community Health) to balance skills training with project-based learning. Annually; winter quarter before spring class.

Task 8: Create more specific goals for CRD 290 facilitation each quarter which can either be taken on by faculty or 2<sup>nd</sup> year CDGG students. Students to create goals together with chair/executive committee the quarter before.

Task 9. Work with CRD, LA+ED, and other units offering the Core Electives to ensure that the lists are up to date (removing classes that are no longer offered and adding new ones.) Annually; chair and Executive Committee.

Task 10. Executive committee should develop long-term approach to teaching the “thesis prep” course and other ways to support students in the design and production of their theses. For first year students the focus would be setting up summer research; for second years the focus would be support for completing the writing. Put into formal class approval process. Done.

Task 11. Collect and keep updated and annotated list of courses students have taken outside of CDGG core. Such a list exists in the student handbook; update annually with handbook. Carrie to coordinate.

Task 12. Establish a CDGG Learning Environment set of principles, drawing from the UCD Principles of Community. Next year; Natalia and David to organize.

Goal 2: Examine structural inequality/inequity in core course content and teaching styles:

Task 1: Hold formal and informal faculty workshops to examine assumptions and implicit bias—particularly assumptions about knowledge and knowledge production and student/teacher roles—and modify syllabi and other materials accordingly. Yearly end of summer/beginning of year syllabus party; those doing courses present syllabi & comment. Catherine to convene; Natalia to help.

Task 2: Increase course content on critical race theory, social stratification economics, and related topics. Include range of forms of marginalization (gender, sexuality, language, immigration status, age). Do in conjunction with above.

Task 3: Build in time for reflection and processing of information within class to encourage participation of English as an Additional Language/international students. Address this issue also in Executive Committee and other forums. See Task 1; acknowledge in syllabi and communicate to instructors. Invite International Center staff to visit fall workshop.

Task 4: Infuse content in core courses that reflects historical and contemporary experiences of communities of color using an asset based, not deficit-based manner (e.g., community cultural wealth.) See Task 1; emphasize in fall workshop.

Goal 3: Ensure that courses have up-to-date treatment of other important dimensions of community development

Task 1: Encourage faculty to have their classes include an international/global focus plus a domestic focus including indigenous and other underrepresented communities.

Task 2: Include constructive critiques of the field from people negatively affected by externally-imposed community development.

Task 3: Encourage/recruit faculty who can include themes such as affordable housing, community economic development, program evaluation, and public participation

into their classes. Also encourage/recruit faculty with real-world community development experience. Coordinate with CRD, LDA, and other units on this.

## DIVERSITY

The CDGG program strives to attract, support, and retain diverse students and faculty, as well as to teach diverse theories, content, and skills. Program cohorts are typically less diverse than the undergraduate student body at UC Davis and the undergraduate Community and Regional Development major in particular. Faculty within the CDGG have also often been less diverse than undergrad or graduate student bodies as well as California and global communities.

Genuine diversity and pluralism refers to underrepresented groups being physically present and treated as equals on campus and at the program. Administrators, faculty and students affirm one another's dignity by demonstrating readiness to benefit from other's experience and willingness to acknowledge one another's contribution to the common welfare of the college and program. Evidence of genuine diversity would include programs to support communities that have historically been underserved and initiatives to remedy social inequities.

### Goal 1: Recruit and retain diverse student cohorts

Task 1: Improve communications and outreach materials (including the significant self-directed qualities of the program) Catherine to work w/ Carrie, Noli, Vikram, Paul Min, and Paul Terry on website. (Paul Terry at Grad Studies hired to diversify websites.) 6 months time frame. (May-Aug)

Task 2: Increase outreach to and recruitment of more diverse student pools (e.g. international CSU, HBCU, HSI students). Consider translating recruitment materials into different languages. Carrie and Natalia to translate materials. Carrie will distribute materials at CGS and AAG conferences. Idealist Fair. Mail flyers to Deans offices at CSUs. Get intern/volunteer to do that. Steve to coordinate with Carrie. 6 month time frame.



Task 3: Ensure that faculty are responsive to EAL learners and other issues faced by international students. Chair to send annual email regarding such issues. Admin committee to be careful about adequate TOEFL scores.

Task 4: Develop stronger connections to the CRD undergraduate program and other relevant programs (ethnic studies, sustainable design, SAFS, IAD). Reconsider the place of professional work as admissions criteria because community-based work takes many different forms. Chair to send annual email and flyer encouraging students to apply, plus coordinate with Master Advisors.

Task 5: Identify resources needed for first generation graduate students. This can include developing new resources and/or partnering with existing resources on campus. Catherine to coordinate with Josephine Moreno in Grad Studies (head of Diversity office). Annual.

Task 6: Promote cohort support mechanisms (e.g. independent seminars, peer-to-peer mentoring, reading/writing groups). CRD 260 does that for second years, orientation for first years. Revive peer-to-peer mentoring with next year cohort. Yulia to be lead for next year. 6 month time frame; annual.

Task 7: Develop an improved online repository of student work (theses and projects) to show prospective students the range of past student work. Chair and Carrie to emphasize this on an annual basis, and get students to indicate which are projects.

Task 8: Regularly assess barriers to student success (e.g., progress on theses and graduating in normative time) and develop strategies to better support them. Conduct annual student experience survey in late May. Executive committee. Chair to work with student reps.

## Goal 2: Recruit and retain a diverse faculty affiliated with the CDGG

Task 1: Reach out and invite diverse faculty of all disciplines from the campus to become CDGG members Chair and Executive Committee. Ongoing.

Task 2: Encourage cultural competency amongst faculty members (on issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and other factors). Chair to work with HE leadership on workshops done by Mikail Villalobos or others, and also to encourage faculty to attend off-campus workshops. On-going.

Task 3: Communicate CDGG faculty values, needs and concerns about diversity to core departments and programs. Update website; Chair emails to faculty; trainings; etc. Ongoing. Get live links to theses.

Task 4: Seek formal participation in hiring committees of core departments and programs. Chair and Ex Com work with HE and other units.

## SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The CDGG program currently encourages a sense of community in concrete and valuable ways. First Fridays, orientation retreats, and the connection to the Geography Graduate group are successful efforts to build community amongst students, faculty, staff, and alumni. However, there are different levels of community within the program, including at the course level, within/across cohorts, in the program overall, amongst faculty, and amongst the wider alumni network. At strategic planning workshops and on surveys, students and faculty commented on the lack of engagement of the many CDGG affiliated-faculty, including those outside the Human Ecology units.

### Goal 1: Promote student-faculty connections

Task 1: Provide guidance to CDGG students on how to connect with faculty as advisors, committee members and mentors. Update handbook and website; emphasize at orientation. Ongoing.

Task 2: Clarify roles across the CDGG of the major professor/ thesis chair in research thesis preparation and writing. Put advising/ mentoring guidelines in the handbook and distribute to faculty annually. Use the first year-end report to check on progress. Chair emails faculty annually about mentoring expectations; encourages participation in UCD mentoring workshops, etc. Ongoing.

Task 3: Connect a broader array of faculty members and students within the CDGG to student admissions, advising, and thesis committees. Chair emphasizes these things in emails and makes specific asks; have annual surveys about member activities. Consider expanding Ex Com. Rotate new people into Admissions Committee. Ongoing.

Task 4: Invite faculty to discuss their research and courses in Fall CRD 290. Ongoing.

## Goal 2: Encourage faculty to be more actively involved in the CDGG

Task 1: Develop clear descriptions and communication of expectation for CDGG membership, processes for evaluating faculty contributions to the program, and transitioning out non-participating members. Chair to do this on an ongoing basis. Carrie to send out form for what faculty has done in last 2 years, with added checkbox if you'd like to discuss opportunities with the chair.

Task 2: Hold discussions with CRD faculty to determine how CRD can be a more supportive home unit for the CDGG. Jonathan and other executive committee members to do this on an ongoing basis.

Task 3: Individually invite faculty to participate in courses and events, and to assume governance roles. Chair to contact likely new faculty on an ongoing basis. Student reps to suggest faculty they've encountered for membership/ leadership roles. Encourage faculty to attend CRD 290, especially in Spring to hear student work. If an annual meeting is held, have lightning talks by faculty and students to generate interest. Consider holding annual meeting in fall rather than spring.

Task 4: Encourage the active participation of non-Senate faculty in the CDGG (UC Cooperative Extension, Lecturers, Professional Researchers, other academics) Chair to specifically include these folks in annual meeting and CRD 290 presentations, and to invite one to be on executive committee.

## Goal 3: Strengthen student cohort relationships and CDGG identity

Task 1: Develop CDGG program swag—e.g. student designed t-shirts, stickers, etc. Done by students in 2019.

Task 2: Provide CDGG students with a physical space to create a sense of ownership and belonging. We do have Hunt 158. Encourage students to personalize this space more.

Task 3: Provide time for community-building at the course level (e.g. professors should provide time for peer-to-peer support). Chair to emphasize this with CRD 240

and CRD 200 instructors (ongoing). Encourage all instructors to include field trips and other community-building activities.

Task 4: Create an informal buddy/mentor program pairing first and second year students. First-year student rep on Executive Committee to develop mentor connections for incoming students in summer/early fall each year. Chair and Carrie to work with student representative on this.

#### Goal 4: Host more informal CDGG gatherings in a variety of settings

Task 1: Recruit a CDGG student social coordinator to plan events. Ex Com to seek this annually.

Task 2: Plan additional events such as “Thirsty Thursdays” after core courses. Consider moving First Friday to Third Thursday. (Survey students on this.)

Task 3: Plan events to accommodate families, non-Davis residents. Have picnic gatherings at Farmers Market Wed night or Saturdays. Minimize alcohol at some events.

#### Goal 5: Build and strengthen the CDGG alumni network

Task 1: Invite alumni to host quarterly events, workshops. Consider separating symposium (in May) from graduation (in June) as previously. If they're done jointly, try to do symposium piece first, separate from graduation). Invite alumni back in to speak to CRD 290 every winter.

Task 4. Develop an alumni mentoring program for graduating students in supporting internships, theses, and job placements. Consider doing this when person to lead it appears, as part of alumni network.

Task 2: Encourage alumni to inform current students about potential jobs and to discuss career paths and opportunities with them. Do this through a LinkedIn list (below).

Task 3: Intentionally engage diverse alumni perspectives in skill-sharing events with students. Chair and everyone; ongoing.

Task 4: Build a more formal alumni network accessible to all members of the CDGG community. Yulia and future student reps to help Carrie develop CDGG LinkedIn list (Summer).

Task 5: Create a CDGG advisory board with strong alumni presence. (Note: the CDGG had this when led by Ted Bradshaw). Future goal when someone has energy.

## LONG-TERM DIRECTIONS

Participants in the strategic planning workshops discussed longer-term visions for the CDGG program, including the desire for more diverse students, faculty, and class offerings. Students and faculty agreed they want the program to be more integrated across existing courses and to offer more core professional skills courses. Participants expressed the need for a group of diverse core faculty to provide consistent and visionary leadership for the program. Other recommendations include the following possible directions.

### Goal 1: Improve, reshape, and expand CDGG program structure

Task 1: Explore creating thematic tracks and course sequencing of core electives within the program. Explore as needed; all.

Task 2: Explore creating a community development PhD program to shape the field in more substantial ways. (Note, this had been considered about 10 years ago but the momentum stalled due to the loss of initiative champions.) Steve to contact Frank to try to locate Ted Bradshaw's proposal for Ph.D. and review that, and Carrie to check files. Emphasize CRD track within Geography in the meanwhile.

Task 3: Reconsider a long-term goal of developing multiple programs within CDGG to attract a wider range of applicants—i.e. full-time/ academic and professional or subject-matter based programs. (Note: this had been considered several years ago and was judged to be unfeasible at the time.) Explore if situation changes.

Task 4: Regularly evaluate the program's structure, goals, and outcomes on a bi-annual basis. Establish evaluation protocols (indicators, goals, methods). Explore as needed.

Task 5: Develop/ update the CDGG strategic plan every 5 years. Chair and Executive Committee.

## Goal 2: Develop a program funding strategy

Task 1. Work closely with the CAES development staff to develop a fundraising plan. Emphasize alumni, parents, leaders in community development organizations, and foundations. We've never had much luck with this in the past. Explore in the future as energy arises.

Task 2. Create appeal campaigns around particular needs as they arise.

Task 3. Seek endowed student scholarships and funding for student travel/ participation in conferences.

Task 4. Create and update web-based sites with funding opportunities, and coordinate with the GGG.