



CENTER FOR CALIFORNIA STUDIES

2024

Annual Report



SACRAMENTO
STATE



CENTER for
CALIFORNIA STUDIES

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the U.S., rising prices have been accompanied by record-low levels of confidence in some American institutions. According to an article by Gallup Media in October 2024 about a recent Gallup poll of Americans' trust in their institutions, "The United States continues to suffer from a crisis in confidence in many institutions, including the federal government, its three branches, and those who either hold or are running for public office.

... Local and state governments and the American people as a whole are the only entities garnering trust from more than half of U.S. adults." What's more, overall approval numbers mask huge partisan differences of upwards of 40 percentage points. Fifty-four percent of Democrats trust the media, as opposed to only 12% of Republicans, and only 24% of Democrats trust the judicial branch of the federal government, as opposed to 71% of Republicans. One bright spot from the latest Gallup poll: A majority of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans trust their state and local governments.

But will public confidence in state and local governments erode in the near future, as it has with federal institutions? And how can state and local leaders govern on behalf of a populace with such extreme partisan differences?

The Center for California Studies is honored to play a role in supporting our state's institutions by recruiting recent college graduates to join the ranks of the public servants working for the people of California.

We invest time and resources in reaching groups that are underrepresented among the state's workforce, with the understanding that strong public institutions are supported by a workforce that represents the diversity of its people. In addition, lived experiences that reflect the varied experiences of Californians bring important perspectives that improve decision-making.



Leonor Ehling, Executive Director
Center for California Studies

BRIDGING ACADEMIA AND GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF STRENGTHENING CALIFORNIA'S DEMOCRACY.

The Center for California Studies is based at California State University, Sacramento – the “Capital Campus” of the California State University. Being located in California’s capital strategically positions the Center to be the University’s link to the three branches of California’s government, other universities, think tanks, and outside partnerships involved with public service in California. This, paired with our extensive research, academic programming, and position as part of the country’s largest public university system, makes us uniquely equipped to fulfill our mission and accomplish our goals.

TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION,
THE CENTER HAS IDENTIFIED
THESE GOALS:

To foster in California’s future leaders a dedication to public service and a commitment to the values of representative democracy.

To assist California’s public officials and policymakers in addressing the state’s challenges through policy research and productive dialogue.

CENTER FOR CALIFORNIA STUDIES

Leonor Ehling
Executive Director

Ambar Carlisle Salgueiro
Director, Jesse M. Unruh
Assembly Fellowship
Program

Megan Thorall
Director, Judicial Fellowship
Program and Deputy
Director

Laura Baker
Director, Executive
Fellowship Program

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Coordinator

Elias Paez
Senate Fellowship
Coordinator

Jenna Westbrook-Kline
Executive Fellowship
Coordinator



CENTER FOR CALIFORNIA STUDIES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capital Fellows Programs



ASSEMBLY ★ JUDICIAL ★ SENATE ★ EXECUTIVE

We enjoyed continued success with the four Capital Fellows programs. The competitive nature of the programs and the high-quality training provided makes Fellows very sought after by offices in all three branches of California government.

- Our applications for the 2025–2026 cohort of Fellows went up 48% relative to last year.
- Thanks to the leadership of Speaker Robert Rivas, the Assembly Fellowship Program received a funding increase in the 2024 state budget to support seven additional Assembly Fellows. This is the most significant program expansion in many years.
- In addition to receiving a salary and full benefits, Fellows continued to enjoy financial support from the Hodson Fund, which funded 23 scholarships totaling over \$10,000. Female-identifying Fellows from all four programs also received scholarships from the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls and California Women Lead.
- We welcomed two new staff members to the Center's ranks: Laura Baker, the new Director of the Executive Fellowship Program, and Shannon Swanson, our new Senior Outreach Specialist.

Other Internship Programs

- We continued to serve as Sac State's liaison with the Panetta Institute Congressional Internship Program, assisting the campus in selecting a Sac State student to nominate to this program.
- We continued to provide support and assistance to the Sacramento Semester Program, through which CSU students can spend a semester working in the state Capitol.

Envisioning California Speaker Series Events

Since 2019, this program has focused on timely policy and political issues, often featuring research funded by the Center. This year's events included:

- Insights and Implications: Californians on Race & Education – April 3, 2024 (with UC Berkeley)
- Where Do Black Voters Stand? New Public Opinion Poll Offers Insights into Black Voters and the 2024 Elections – May 23, 2024
- The Harris Effect: Black Voters and the 2024 Election – September 26, 2024
- The November 2024 Election: What Just Happened (with PIE) – November 20, 2024

LegiSchool – LegiSchool held three town halls on the topics of AI, climate change, and voting. It also held its fifth consecutive Virtual Civics Institute, where 26 students from all over the state learned about state government. The program also tested a new curriculum aligned with Common Core standards.

Faculty Research Fellows Program – Since its relaunch in 2021, the Faculty Research Fellows Program has experienced continued success in matching the expertise of CSU faculty with the research needs of state policy makers. This year's reports included a report on the impact of AI on children, for Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, and a report on the public benefits of broadband/last mile connections, for the executive branch. In the past six months, we have received requests for three research projects from our partners in the executive branch, reflecting an uptick in interest from the executive branch. This is a very positive sign, indicating that the program is providing a valued service.

Other Partnerships

California Elections Data Archive (CEDA)

We continue to partner with the Institute of Social Research in producing the California Elections Data Archive for the California Secretary of State. This is a repository of local election data from throughout California. It is widely used by public officials and researchers.

Education Policy Fellows Program

We jointly run this program with Sac State's EdInsights Center, bringing together 20 education professionals to learn about policy making and discuss equity hurdles in education. The 2023–2024 year was the first time the Center had taken the lead on this program, and we are expecting to continue in this role through 2024–2025.



Founded in 1982 and located at Sacramento State, the capital campus of the California State University (CSU), the Center possesses a unique trust: **to bring the resources of the state's largest university system to the service of public discourse, civic education, and state government.**

Relative to last year, applications for the 2025-2026 cohort of Fellows went up

48%

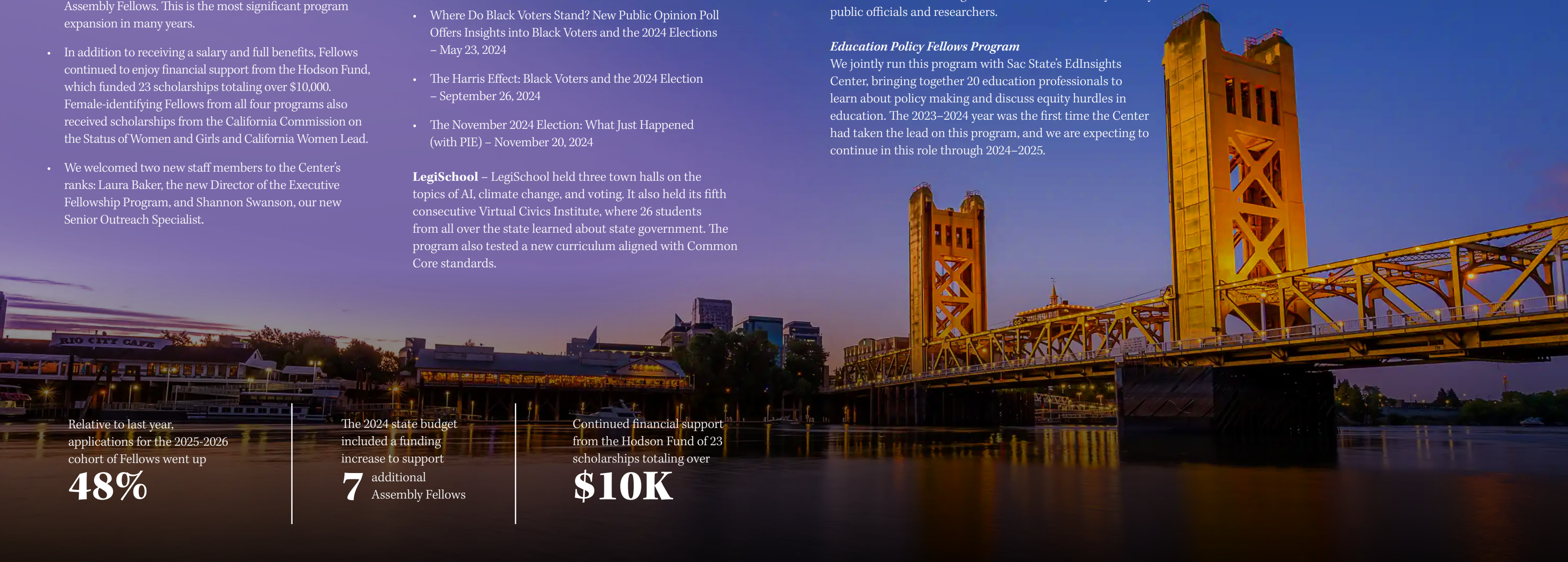
The 2024 state budget included a funding increase to support

7

 additional Assembly Fellows

Continued financial support from the Hodson Fund of 23 scholarships totaling over

\$10K



THE JESSE M. UNRUH ASSEMBLY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Assembly Fellows
2023-2024



Founded in 1957, the Jesse M. Unruh Assembly Fellowship Program is the oldest of the four Capital Fellows Programs and marked its 67th anniversary in 2024. The program is part of the Assembly's earliest efforts to professionalize legislative staff and became a partnership of the California State Assembly, the Center, and Sacramento State in the 1980s.

The goal of the Assembly Fellowship Program is to provide an opportunity for aspiring public servants to participate directly in the legislative process.

"My time as an Assembly Fellow enhanced my understanding of politics, connected me with exceptional mentors and colleagues, and gave me the confidence to pursue a career in government. Furthermore, it allowed me to bring a diverse perspective to California policy while solidifying my commitment to public service. I am grateful for the growth and knowledge I gained during the fellowship."



Jerika Edwards
Assembly Fellow, 2023-2024

Key Updates for 2024

- In 2024, the program size increased. Sponsored by the Speaker of the California State Assembly, the program received a budgetary increase, allowing the number of Fellows to grow from 18 to 22 for the 2024–2025 program year.
- The program is expected to expand to 25 Assembly Fellows in 2025–2026, with this size remaining consistent in the following years.
- Orientation was fully in-person in 2024, following over two years of online and hybrid programming. Fellows participated in an intensive seven-week in-person orientation, focusing on process, policy, politics, and placement.
- The program continues to benefit from a strong relationship with Assembly leadership, with 55 Assemblymember applicants seeking fellows this year.
- Additionally, the program sustained its partnership with the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CCSWG) and California Women Lead, a nonpartisan leadership development organization. Through these partnerships, scholarships were provided to female-identifying Fellows across all four Capital Fellows Programs. Participants also attended a day-long leadership development conference featuring elected officials and high-ranking members of the Administration.

"The Assembly Fellowship has been an amazing experience and an opportunity to be directly involved with California's legislative process and community. The lessons and experiences I have gained have allowed me to more clearly define my goals and vision for my career. I was fortunate to receive strong mentorship and guidance from colleagues and other experienced community members. This role has only made me more eager to expand my network, policy expertise, and professional development. I will always cherish this experience."



Hector A. Soto
Assembly Fellow, 2023-2024



THE SENATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Senate Fellows
2023-2024



Established in 1973, the California Senate Fellows Program is the second oldest of the four Capital Fellows programs. Secretary of the California Senate, Erika Contreras, a former Fellow, continues to be a principal partner of the program. The 11-month Fellowship combines experiential learning, professional and career development, and mentorship alongside an intensive academic component and policy briefings from subject matter experts. The program is a key initiative of the Center for California Studies, dedicated to building legislative staff capacity and strengthening California's democratic governance structure.

Our Senate partners regard the Fellows Program as an integral part of the Senate's staff succession plan, contributing to the development of well-prepared, high-caliber legislative staff.

"The highlight of my fellowship has been the discussions with experts that challenge and expand my beliefs, coupled with the privilege of working closely with Senator Seyarto and his fantastic team. Additionally, I cherish the bonds I've formed with my fellowship class, who have become like a second family to me."



Christian Lopez
Senate Fellow, 2023-2024

Civic Education and Policy Training

Civic education is central to the Center for California Studies' mission. The planning, selection, and preparation of Senate Fellows exemplify this goal. In 2024, Senate Fellows completed their academic seminar, which culminated in each Fellow writing a comprehensive policy paper. These 40-page capstone projects provided an in-depth analysis of selected issues, emphasizing policy recommendations and actionable options for the future.

The policy papers focused on "live" research, relying on interviews and consultations with key legislative offices and stakeholders rather than purely library-based research. This approach allows Fellows to develop advanced research and communication skills while engaging directly with decision makers and practitioners.

Legislative Contributions

During the Fellowship, Fellows gained hands-on experience managing legislation, staffing committees, conducting research, analyzing bills and budgets, managing stakeholder relationships, and providing constituent services. These critical roles helped to deepen their understanding of the legislative process while contributing meaningfully to Senate offices.

Post-Fellowship Success

The 2023-24 Senate Fellows Program concluded in September 2024, with participants successfully transitioning to post-fellowship careers.

- Fifteen Fellows accepted staff positions within the Legislature.
- Two Fellows accepted positions in another branch of government.
- One Fellow pursued graduate or law school opportunities.

Selection and Orientation

The 2024 Senate Fellows Selection Panel played a pivotal role in selecting the program's 18 Fellows. The panel reviewed 138 applications and facilitated 90 interviews. It was composed of representatives from the Center for California Studies and Sacramento State's Political Science Department along with bipartisan Senate staff members.

The selected Fellows began their journey in October 2023, with a seven-week in-person orientation focusing on experiential learning, legislative processes, policy analysis, and the customs and practices of the California Senate. This comprehensive orientation prepared Fellows for their assignments, which began in Senate offices in December 2023.



Looking Forward

The California Senate Fellows Program continues to evolve as an essential bridge between education and legislative service. With its expanded cohort and enhanced training opportunities, the program reinforces its commitment to developing the next generation of leaders in California's legislative process.

"Participating in the Senate Fellows program was one of the most rewarding and instrumental experiences of my professional career. I had the privilege of working on legislation that directly impacted millions of Californians, while receiving support and mentorship from the most dedicated team. The fellowship gave me the space to grow, learn from my mistakes, and played a crucial role in shaping who I am today."



Nune Garipian
Senate Fellow, 2020-2021



THE JUDICIAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Judicial Fellows
2023-2024



In 1997, the Center for California Studies collaborated with the Judicial Council of California to create a unique program in the third branch of state government. At a time in history when the state court faced unprecedented changes in governance and funding, the California State University system identified its niche in the unique public management arena of court policy and administration.

Rooted in public service and experiential learning, the Judicial Fellows balance full-time work in the field of court administration in the executive offices of Superior Courts and Judicial Council offices across California with graduate-level academics through monthly field and academic seminars.

“The Judicial Fellowship opened my eyes to the world of court administration, an essential part of our court system. As a Fellow placed at the Self-Help Center at the Sacramento Superior Court, I had the opportunity to participate in projects that directly led to access to justice for litigants who were unrepresented or had financial, technological, and linguistic barriers. It is because of the knowledge and connections I gained during the Judicial Fellowship, both in placement and academic seminar, that I plan to continue my public service career in the California courts.”



Naslie Rezaei
Judicial Fellow, 2022–2023

The Judicial Fellowship Program selects 10 Fellows annually and is the only Capital Fellows Program to offer placement opportunities statewide. Placement locations in 2024 included Superior Courts in the counties of Alameda, Butte, Los Angeles, Nevada, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, and San Mateo, as well as the Judicial Council’s Office of Governmental Affairs, Office of Policy and Research, Office of Court Research, and Criminal Justice Services division.

Judicial Fellows primarily served on-site at their placement courts and offices, with field and academic seminars held in person. Field seminar locations in 2024 included the Butte County Superior Court, Placer County Superior Court, and San Bernardino Superior Court. Additionally, the cohort attended the State of the Judiciary and participated in the Bench-Bar Coalition meetings at the state Capitol in March 2024.

In June 2024, the class of 2023–2024 completed their year-long Fellowship Projects. These projects included the creation of an internal website and dashboards for a collaborative court team, the redesign and launch of a new juror information card/summons, and a statewide evaluation of pretrial reminder and notification systems.

The class of 2023–2024 concluded their Fellowships in July. In September 2024, we welcomed the incoming Judicial Fellows for in-person orientation in Sacramento. For 2024–2025, orientation was expanded to two weeks and featured an introductory field seminar, additional professional development workshops, and two alumni networking luncheons. The 2024–2025 cohort has learned more about the topics of case flow management and artificial intelligence (AI) during the fall seminars, building a strong foundation for work in their placements across California’s judicial branch.

Virtual Speaker Series

The virtual Speaker Series focuses on an aspect of court administration or professional development. Fellows speak with various court administrators and learn more about career paths, changes in the judicial branch, technology updates, and current public policy issues. Virtual speakers in 2024 included Anita Lee from the Legislative Analyst’s Office and Brett Howard, Chief Information Officer of the Orange County Superior Court.

Class of 2024–2025 Selection

In 2024, the program continued the practice of in-person interviews with the option of appearing remotely for selection interviews.



Keep up to date on the
Judicial Fellows!

 cajudicial.wordpress.com

 [@cajudicial](https://www.instagram.com/cajudicial)

“The essence of the Judicial Fellowship Program is that you aren’t meant to know everything before joining, nor when leaving: The focus is on the person I am now and ways to better myself personally and professionally in the areas where I can contribute the most. As a Black woman, a mother, and a nontraditional college graduate, coming from a small town in the Midwest, I have experienced my share of challenges. My Fellowship experience, however, has instilled gratitude within me that I have felt even in the midst of the challenges — and I’ve welcomed them all.”



Caché Raine-Jones
Judicial Fellow, 2023–2024



THE EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Executive Fellows
2023-2024



The Executive Fellowship Program was created in 1985 through the joint efforts of then-Sacramento State President Don Gerth and then-Governor George Deukmejian. It was the third of the now four Fellowship programs comprising the Capital Fellows Programs. The Executive Fellowship Program started with 10 Fellows in October 1986. The program expanded to 15 Fellows in 1994 and 18 in 1997. The Executive Fellowship Program continues to accelerate the personal leadership growth of public sector professionals toward preserving and protecting our democracy. Executive Fellows are skilled, ethical, and purposeful leaders who are committed to making a difference in California and who invest their career in protecting and securing opportunities for all communities to thrive.

“I have learned so much during my Executive Fellows experience. In my placement, I have had the ability to do hands-on work with direct involvement from state leaders, helping me develop and become more confident in my skills as a public servant. The Executive Fellowship is a great opportunity for an individual who wants to become a leader in public service. Even if you don’t have experience in politics, the Executive Fellowship can teach you the skills important to a career as a public servant.”



Corbin Farias
Executive Fellow, 2023–2024

Fellows work full-time under the mentorship of senior-level executive staff in the executive branch and participate in graduate coursework, earning a certificate in Applied Policy and Government. Executive Fellows research and implement public policy by analyzing data and legislation, seeking public comment, distributing resources, and enabling interagency collaboration. Fellows prepare strategy documents, reports, and mission-critical communications in support of executive branch officials and communities across California.

Led by Interim Director Megan Thorall, the 2023–2024 Executive Fellows cohort was met with enthusiasm from potential placement offices through several in-person informational sessions during orientation. The 2023–2024 placements included the Go-Biz International Affairs Unit, Delta Stewardship Council, California High-Speed Rail Authority, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, Department of Toxic Substances Control, California Student Aid Commission, Department of Healthcare Access & Information, California Air Resources Board, Department of Food and Agriculture, California Research Bureau, Strategic Growth Council, Cradle-to-Career Data System, and Business, Consumer Services & Housing Agency.

Laura Baker joined the Executive Fellowship Program as the new Director in summer 2024 and immediately noted this cohort’s commitment to equity-centered work, determination to make a unique impact, and clear sense of values.

The 2024–2025 Executive Fellows are an engaged and inquisitive group. They enjoyed a fast-paced and information-packed orientation, including the resurrection of the Placement Fair, where Fellows had an opportunity to meet Mentor teams from 30 different potential placement offices. They began their placements in mid-November and are already starting on substantive Fellowship work projects. Our newest class of Fellows is eager to continue to learn and connect.

They are exemplary of the program’s values, with particular strengths in inclusivity, curiosity, and dedication to service. We are confident they will meaningfully contribute to our state’s important work and achieve significant professional growth in the year ahead.

Keep up to date on the Executive Fellows!

 executivefellowship.wordpress.com/category/blog-posts

 [@execfellows](https://www.instagram.com/execfellows)

 [Executive Fellowship Program](https://www.linkedin.com/company/executive-fellowship-program)

“The Fellowship has given me an intimate and hands-on perspective on state government, as well as a community of Fellows and professionals who are invested in my personal and professional development. From the orientation, academic seminar, and placement process, I have learned so much about the executive branch and the role that California plays not only locally but also its impact across the country. California leads in many initiatives, from economic development and transportation to climate and education, to name a few. Right now, more than ever, is the time to safeguard our values and make an impact through public service and government.”



Marysol Valdez
Executive Fellow, 2024-2025



THE LEGISCHOOL PROJECT

Real Issues, Real Debate, Real Curriculum

Founded in 1994, the LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between Sacramento State and the California Legislature. LegiSchool encourages high school students to be civically engaged in their district and beyond. Our diverse programming throughout the year gives students the opportunity to talk about important state issues and engage in current events.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

- **February 2024**
AI and Technology
- **April 2024**
Climate Change and Environmental Justice
- **October 2024**
Voting in California

Our first Town Hall of 2024 was conducted in February and focused on AI and Technology. High school students from West Campus High School gathered at the State Library Galleria to discuss the impact of AI on society, future opportunities, and ethical challenges. In April, LegiSchool hosted the second Town Hall of the year in the March Fong Eu Secretary of State Building complex. The theme of the discussion was Climate Change and Environmental Justice and centered around the Earth Day event that same week. The students in our Town Halls compete in team activities, play trivia games, and win prizes while learning about important policy issues.

In Summer 2024, LegiSchool hosted the Virtual Civics Institute for the fifth consecutive year, an online virtual internship experience. For four weeks, 26 students experienced all three branches of government and heard from over 20 guest speakers, learned about policymaking, and presented their Town Hall Final Projects.

VIRTUAL CIVICS INSTITUTE

Summer 2024

LegiSchool hosted for the **5th** consecutive year

In October, LegiSchool hosted the third Town Hall of the year on Voting in California. The event was held at the March Fong Eu Secretary of State Auditorium and focused on voting during a pivotal presidential election year, addressing voter engagement among youth, and the importance of civic participation. The League of Women Voters was present and at its booth, many students pre-registered to vote.

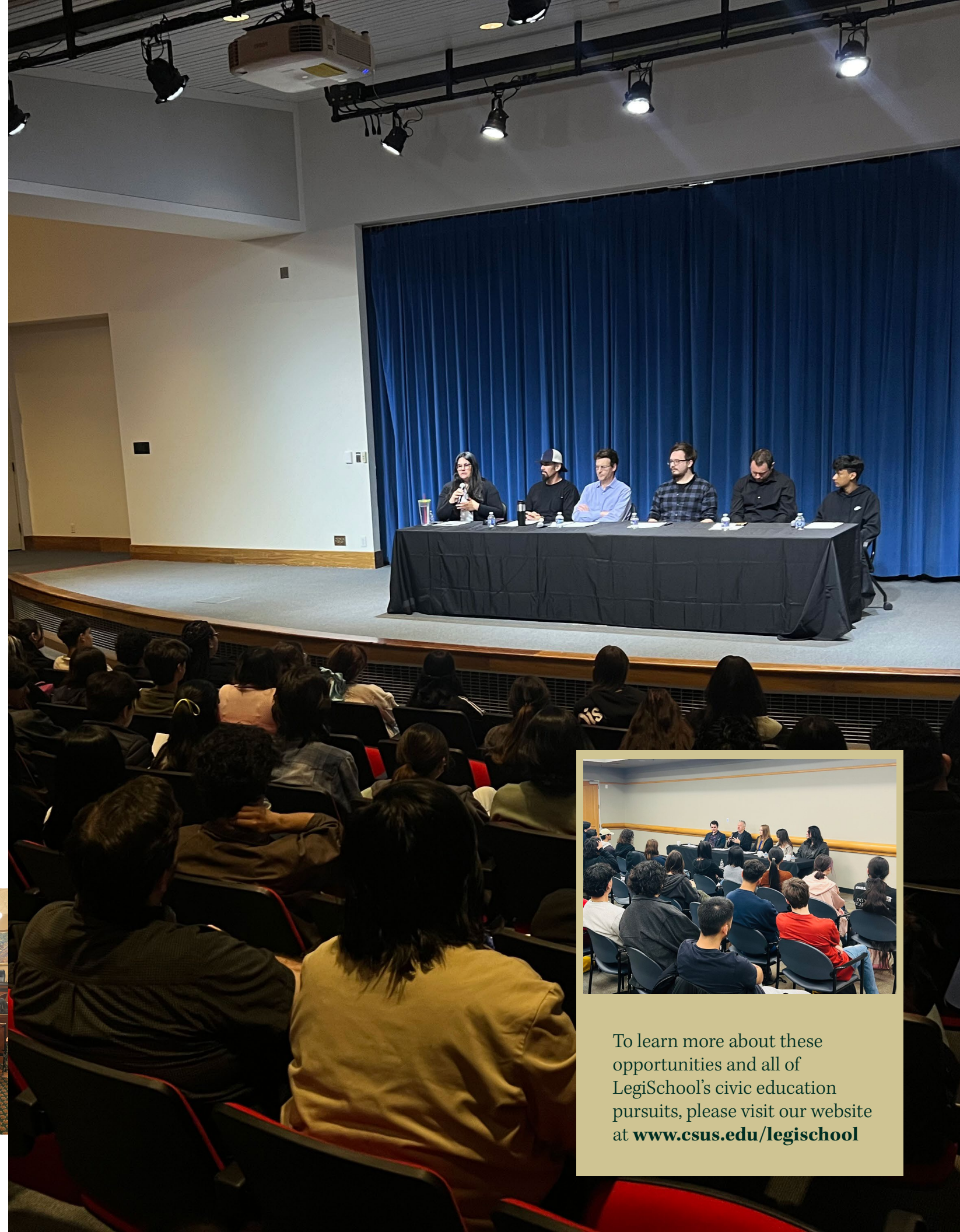
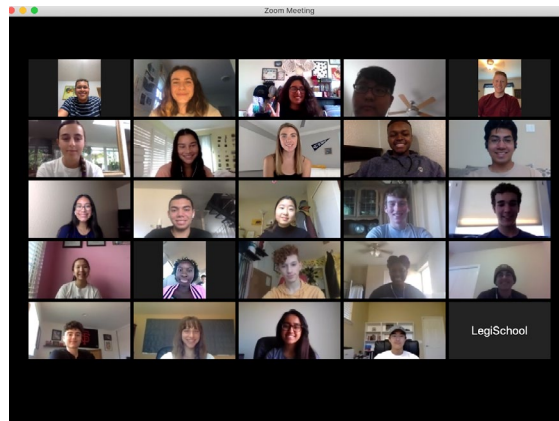
26

students experienced all three branches of government for four weeks

Over

20

guest speakers who talked about policy making



To learn more about these opportunities and all of LegiSchool's civic education pursuits, please visit our website at www.csus.edu/legischool

OUTREACH UPDATE

Outreach and recruitment efforts in 2024 consisted of Fellows, alumni, and staff utilizing in-person career fairs, university classroom visits, email campaigns to various universities, virtual information sessions, and various digital platforms to promote the Capital Fellows Programs. Specifically, our partnership with JSR Strategies enabled us to leverage advertisements on Google, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

We continue to use Facebook and X in addition to Handshake, which allows us to promote the programs and directly message hundreds of prospective candidates. In February 2024, we welcomed a new Senior Outreach Specialist, Shannon Swanson. In collaboration with JSR Strategies, Shannon developed new designs for the various Capital Fellows Programs brochures, which were distributed to our partners across the state and nation in the summer of 2024. Shannon worked closely with branch partners, Center staff, various universities, and dozens of alumni to attract a diverse, robust, and public service-driven pool of applicants for the 2025–2026 cohort.

As a result of outreach and recruitment efforts in 2023, we received 716 applications for the 2024–2025 cohort of Capital Fellows, an increase of 38% compared with the prior application cycle of 2023–2024. The breakdown for each program was as follows: 213 for the Assembly, 193 for the Executive, 134 for the Judicial, and 176 for the Senate.

Increase of 38% in applications for the 2024-2025 cohort of Capital Fellows

213

Assembly applications

193

Executive applications

134

Judicial applications

176

Senate applications

Post-Fellowship Decisions, 2023–2024 Capital Fellows

Program	Stayed with placement or with same Branch	Other State, Federal, or Local Government Service	Graduate or Law School	Private Sector (includes Legislative advocacy-related work)	Nonprofit Sector	Other
ASSEMBLY	16	1	1	0	0	0
EXECUTIVE	10	2	1	1	0	4
JUDICIAL	3	0	3	1	1	2
SENATE	15	2	1	0	0	0
Total	44	5	6	2	1	6

Fig. 1
CAPITAL FELLOWS APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED FELLOWSHIP YEARS 2010-2011 TO 2024-2025

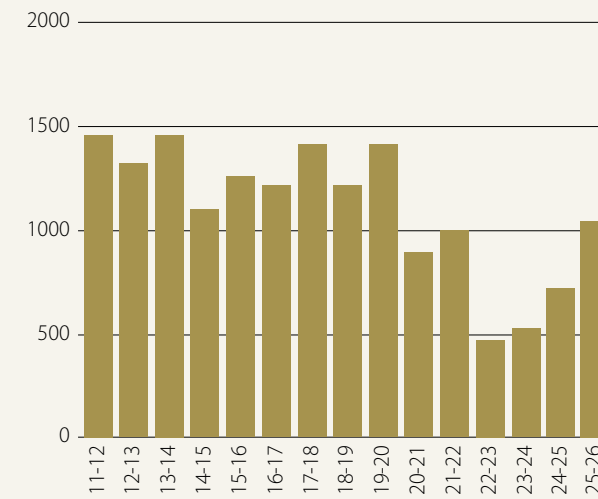


Fig. 2
CAPITAL FELLOWS APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY PROGRAM 2024-2025 AND 2025-2026

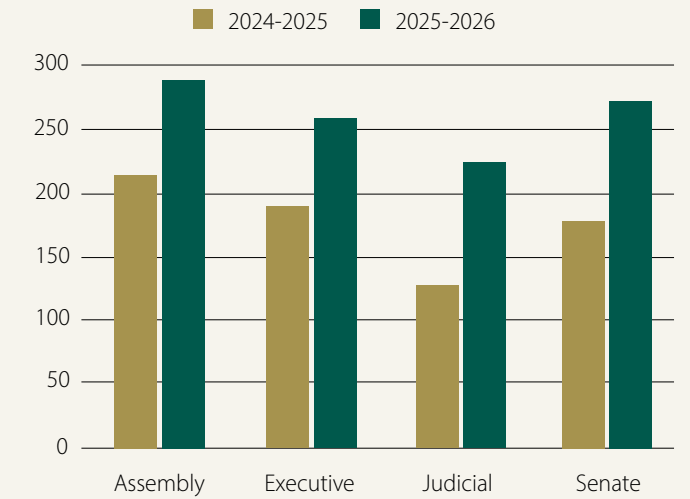


Fig. 3
2024-2025 CAPITAL FELLOWS APPLICATIONS ETHNICITY

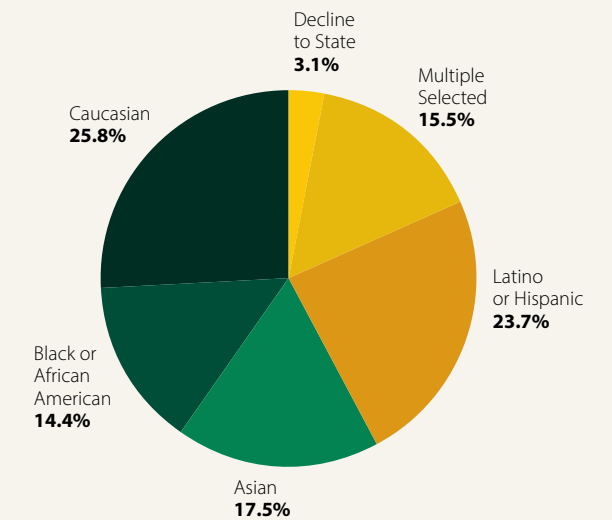
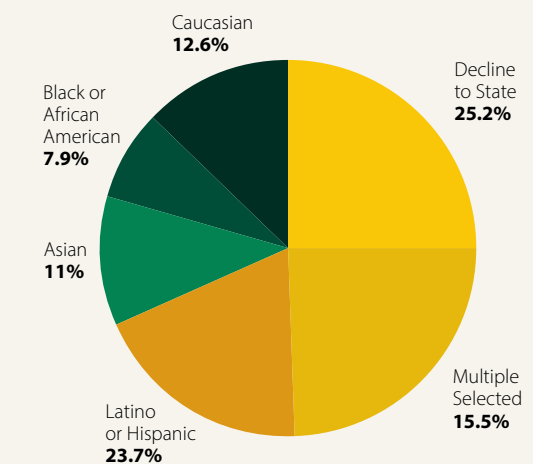


Fig. 4
2023-2024 CAPITAL FELLOWS COHORT ETHNICITY





ENVISIONING CALIFORNIA SPEAKER SERIES

This year, the Center sponsored four events, two of which were cosponsored with other organizations. Recordings of most of the Envisioning California Speaker Series events can be reviewed on the Center's website.

APRIL 3, 2024

Insights & Implications: Californians on Race & Education (with UC Berkeley)

This was a virtual panel discussion of the findings from a 2023 survey that the Center sponsored to examine Californians' views on race and equity in education. The survey was directed by Dr. Kim Nalder (Sac State Political Science Department) and included questions submitted by Dr. Tameka McGlawn and her team at the College & Career Alliance Support Network (CCASN) at UC Berkeley. This event was organized by Dr. McGlawn and featured panelists from education advocacy organizations. It was a follow-up to a previous Envisioning Event held in November 2023, featuring Dr. Nalder's presentation of the survey's main findings.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

The Harris Effect: Black Voters and the 2024 election

During this event, Dr. Towler presented his findings from the second of four national surveys of Black voters. The fielding of this second survey occurred just after Vice President Kamala Harris became the Democratic Party's candidate for president. Dr. Towler used the new data to analyze the effect of Vice President Harris' candidacy on Black voters' political attitudes and preferences.

NOVEMBER 20, 2024

The November 2024 Election: What Just Happened? (with Project for an Informed Electorate)

This was a continuation of what has now become a tradition for the Center and the Project for an Informed Electorate. The two centers began jointly hosting an election "post-mortem" event in November 2020 and have continued to do so every two years in the weeks following a federal election. This year's event featured a panel discussion of Sac State political science faculty Dr. Danielle Martin, Dr. Kristina Flores Victor, Dr. Wesley Hussey, and Dr. Nancy Lapp.

MAY 23, 2024

Where Do Black Voters Stand? New Public Opinion Poll Offers Insight into Black Voters and the 2024 Elections

This was the first in a series of events featuring the research of Dr. Chris Towler (Sac State Political Science) and his Black Voter Project (see below under Continued Collaborations). During this in-person event held at the Sac State campus, Dr. Towler presented his findings from the first of four national surveys of Black voters and their political views.

Fig. 5
2024-2025 CAPITAL FELLOWS APPLICATIONS
UNDERGRAD TYPE

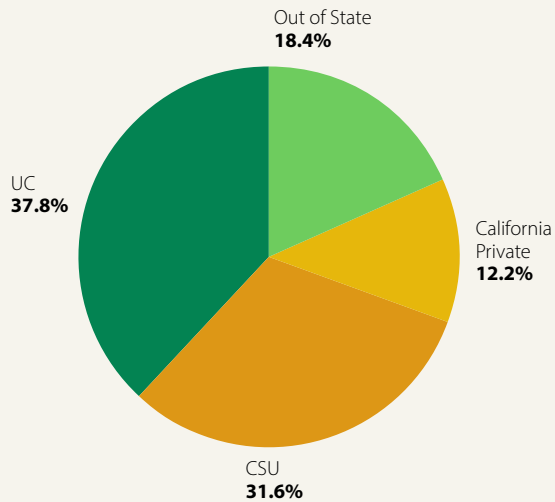


Fig. 6
2023-2024 CAPITAL FELLOWS COHORT
UNDERGRAD TYPE

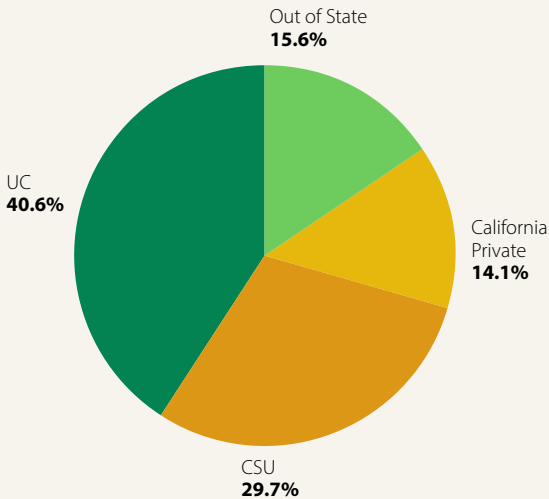
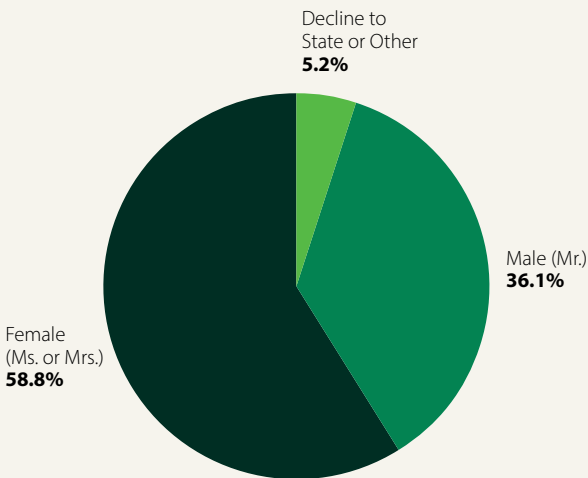


Fig. 7
2024-2025 CAPITAL FELLOWS
APPLICATIONS PREFIX*

*Applicants are provided the opportunity to state their prefix on the application, not sex or gender. For the purpose of this chart, "Female" represents the percentage of applicants who stated "Ms. or Mrs.," "Male" represents the percentage of applicants who stated "Mr.," and "Other" represents the percentage of "Mx."



FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS PROGRAM

The mission of this program is to connect the policy research needs of state policy makers with the vast expertise of the CSU faculty. When we receive a research request from a policymaker, we develop a request for proposal and invite proposals from all CSU faculty. The faculty members put together a report summarizing the research and submit it to the requester. This is a wonderful program that offers a valuable service to policymakers and a great opportunity for CSU faculty interested in policymaking. Three years ago, the Center completed an evaluation of this program. We implemented changes recommended by the evaluators, and since then, the program has enjoyed renewed success, with two to three requests a year and three to four reports produced in response.

The Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Children —

This request was made by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon in 2023. Two reports were completed in response to her request:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Children:** A Review of Impacts and Policy Implications, Abbas Attarwala, Ph.D., Department of Computer Science, CSU Chico
- **Artificial Intelligence and Children:** What Do We Know about the Long-term Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Children? Honggang Wang, Ph.D.,

Assistant Professor, Technology and Operations Management, Cal Poly Pomona

The Social Benefits of Public Broadband/ Last-mile Connections —

This request was made by staff of the executive branch. One report was submitted in response and is in the process of being finalized:

- **Deleting the Divide:** Assessing the Effects of Public Broadband Initiatives, Devika Hazra, Ph.D., Professor, and Ellen Shiau, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Cal State LA



CONTINUED COLLABORATIONS

In 2024, the Center continued to partner with other organizations in sponsoring research projects, hosting Envisioning Events and running programs, including the following:

California Education Policy Fellows Program

This is a program that is jointly run by the Center for California Studies and Sac State's EdInsights Center. It brings approximately 20 education professionals together over the course of an academic year to explore and collaborate around the complex challenges our public education systems face. The California program is part of an established national program sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit. Since its inception in 2016, the California program has served eight cohorts of professionals. 2024 was the second year during which the Center's staff has served in a lead role in designing and implementing the program.

Black Voter Project

Earlier this year, the Center entered into an agreement with Dr. Chris Towler of Sac State's Political Science Department to support the 2024 Black Voter Project Longitudinal Study. This project involves four separate surveys of Black voters across the country from March 2024 to several months after the November 2024 election. During this time, the same respondents in the sample were recontacted, resulting in data that is longitudinal, capturing changes in attitudes over a months-long time period. The data is also representative of Black voters in all 50 states. Dr. Towler has presented his preliminary findings from each round of surveys in our Envisioning California Speaker Series.

California Journal of Politics and Policy

This academic journal was originally managed by the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies. Since 2020, it has been housed at Sac State, thanks to the administration support of the Center and the leadership of Dr. Ted Lascher, Department of Public Policy and Administration, who has served as the editor. After decades of working at Sac State in various capacities, Dr. Lascher retired at the end of 2024. The new editor of the journal is Amal Kumar, Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Administration at Sac State. We look forward to partnership with Amal Kumar and other faculty in keeping this journal alive.

California Research Bureau NEXUS

The California Research Bureau is a branch of the California State Library and has a mission to serve the research needs of state policy makers. Two years ago, the California Research Bureau created CRB NEXUS, a community of California researchers, practitioners, and policymakers "committed to public policy solutions informed by data-driven research." Through NEXUS, the California Research Bureau sponsors online convenings, where researchers present policy-relevant research. The Center has been a member of NEXUS since its inception, and we have enthusiastically connected CSU researchers with this community. Of note, three faculty members who completed reports for the Faculty Research Fellows Program in 2021 were introduced by Center staff to the NEXUS community. These faculty members were later invited by NEXUS staff to present their research at the NEXUS convenings.

HODSON ENDOWMENT



Timothy A. Hodson

The **Timothy A. Hodson Capital Fellows Assistance Fund** is dedicated to the mission of supporting Capital Fellows with needs-based awards. In 2024, over \$10,000 in funding was granted to 23 incoming 2024–2025 Capital Fellows. These funds provide a critical financial bridge needed to start the Fellowship, covering costs ranging from housing deposits to professional wardrobes. Center friends, colleagues, and the Hodson family continued to help sustain the Fund with their generous support.

Since the establishment of the Hodson Fund, we have aided 223 Fellows from 13 consecutive cohorts. These inspiring future leaders represent the California promise and dreams that Tim Hodson often wrote and spoke about and would be so proud to see today.



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