

**BERKELEY
INSTITUTE
FOR YOUNG
AMERICANS**



ANNUAL REPORT

2019

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Director's Message

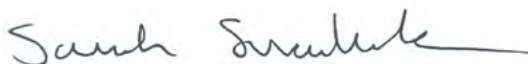
I am excited to share with you the highlights of the Berkeley Institute for Young Americans' accomplishments during the last year. Many of our successes are in large part due to invaluable partnerships with faculty, members of the broader UC Berkeley community, and numerous dedicated policymakers and practitioners. We took important steps over the year to build our core research agenda, focusing on jobs, mental health, and the long-term financial security of young people. At the same time, we have expanded our enterprise for engaging young leaders and policy advocates, and continue to grow our diverse network across California.

The last year has been an exciting time of growth for the Institute. We expanded our research agenda and have partnered with several UC Berkeley faculty to support projects focused on important economic, political, and social issues that matter to young people. We grew our policy network in California and beyond, making connections with other thought leaders reimagining the future of the state and the labor market for young adult workers. We also hosted events to build important collaborations between young leaders, scholars, activists, and policymakers. Some of the highlights from our year include:

- We welcomed two new, full-time staff and a faculty director.
- In April, we held a campus-wide convening about young adult mental health with Chancellor Carol Christ.
- In the Spring of 2019, we partnered with the Terner Center on Housing Innovation to host a speaker series about the California housing crisis and the implications for young Californians.
- We awarded research grants to 5 faculty members and 2 PhD candidates and we supported 12 MPP students through internships and student assistantships.
- We attracted national attention for our research on the increase in young adult poverty in recent decades.

The following pages detail the extensive work we have accomplished over the last year to bring attention to the pressing challenges younger generations face, and the policy solutions that may mitigate generational inequity.

I remain motivated by the level of engagement that I see from young people about understanding the nature of the economic and political challenges that they face, and the enthusiasm they express for addressing these challenges head on. I am proud of the work we have done to expand our research and move toward realistic solutions to improve the long-term success and well-being of future generations, and I am looking forward to another great year ahead in 2020.



Sarah Swanbeck
Executive Director
Berkeley Institute for Young Americans

Who We Are

The Berkeley Institute for Young Americans was founded in 2015 to bring together scholars at the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley, and around the country, to address issues of generational inequity in a fact-based and non-ideological fashion. The central purpose of the Institute is to address a key question:

How can we ensure that public spending invests fairly in future generations so that young people will have ample opportunities for successful and productive lives?

The Institute ties together three strengths of the Goldman School and UC Berkeley — a concern with budgets and the budgetary process; expertise in entitlements, pensions, and social welfare programs; and work on labor markets and economic change. The Institute focuses on both ideas and action. It is the only public university-affiliated research center working to fully understand the challenges that young Americans face, with a focus on systems-level change. The Institute brings together the young and old, left and right, and activists and academics to set a comprehensive policy agenda that will invest in future generations.

VISION

The Berkeley Institute for Young Americans seeks to make public policy sustainable and fair across generations.

MISSION

The Institute's mission is to lead a fact-based, non-partisan discussion about how best to invest in future generations, while promoting bold leadership among the millennial and Gen Z populations. We aim to develop research-driven policy proposals to equip policymakers, advocates, and young leaders with the solution needed to ensure the long-term security and success of the next generation.



OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Become a Leader for Research on Young Americans

We produce high caliber research that identifies economic, social, and political trends that are unique to young generations. We support projects that advance knowledge about the challenges that young adults face as well as programs that can support greater generational equity.

Objective 2: Produce Policy Impact in California and Beyond

We design research-driven policy proposals to equip policymakers, advocates, and young leaders with the solutions needed to ensure the long-term security of the next generation.

Objective 3: Engage Young Leaders

We host events and seminars to bring together young leaders, academics, policymakers, and other key stakeholders to engage with the latest research and policy developments affecting young Americans.

Research Priorities

We work with faculty and other partners at UC Berkeley to produce high quality, non-partisan research. We support research projects that directly align with the Institute's main research priorities outlined below. We prioritize projects that have the potential to affect policy change and drive important conversations about the future of young adults.

BUDGETING FOR THE FUTURE

A part of the Institute's mission is to advance knowledge about how young people fare in our current budget environment. Older generations are living longer, and shifting demographics mean that there are fewer working-adults supporting a growing elderly population. Likewise, healthcare costs have increased, meaning supporting an aging population is getting more expensive. Budgets at every level – federal, state, and local – have been impacted by these health care costs as well as the growing costs in public pensions. Investments in education, infrastructure, and other government services have been squeezed to accommodate these growing costs. With public budgets increasingly strained, how can governments continue to make investments in future generations, strengthen the social safety net, and ensure the long-term sustainability of government programs for generations to come?

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The U.S. is undergoing dramatic changes in the orientation of its economy with significant implications for the economic prospects of young Americans. A growing body of research shows that the millennial and Gen Z generations may be worse off financially than their parents. Where previous generations saw improvements in economic mobility from one generation to the next, the millennial and Gen Z generations have stalled – they have lower incomes and fewer assets than their parents did at the same age. The Institute seeks to better understand the changing nature of the labor market for young adults, with research on issues like the effects of economic recessions on young adults, the rise of the gig economy, and the evolving employee-employer relationship. We also aim to advance research on public policies and programs that can help young Americans thrive in the modern economy.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG ADULTS

People are still coming to understand the daily, lived experience of Millennials and Gen Z. There is no shortage of opinions and anecdotal evidence in mainstream discourse about the culture and lives of young adults. The Institute aims to demystify these conversations by researching what life is really like for young people coming of age in the twenty-first century. Where do young Americans live and where are they moving? How are young people adapting to changing urban landscapes? What are the challenges Millennials and Gen Z face as they transition into adulthood, buy homes, or have children? What new health challenges will young people encounter? To what degree do climate change and environmental policy have an impact on Millennial and Gen Z health and wellbeing?



POLITICAL & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The degree to which young people engage with civic institutions has direct implications for public policy outcomes that affect their futures. We aim to better understand how the perspectives of young people differ from other generations, as well as where they share common ground. We want to understand how their life experiences shape their views. Young people today are more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations—how does this affect their political views? Are there differences in political behavior among rural versus urban youth? Our research seeks to shed light on the voting behavior of young people, and other ways in which young people engage in the democratic process.

➔ Budgeting for the Future

TRANSPARENCY IN STATE BUDGETING

How can we improve state budgeting and transparency in the states?

The Institute is partnering with The Volcker Alliance, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker and 11 other universities to produce the “Truth and Integrity in State Budgeting” project, a 50-state analysis scrutinizing state budgeting practices. Through this work, we have had the opportunity to weigh in on how state governments enact their budgets and how this may have important implications for younger generations, for example how states have chosen to deal with their public pension obligations. **(Lead Researcher: Sarah Swanbeck)**

Publication: Truth and Integrity in State Budgeting: Preventing the Next Fiscal Crisis

PENSIONS IN THE TRENCHES

To what degree are pension costs crowding out government services?

Many experts argue that U.S. local governments are experiencing dramatic increases in their pension expenditures and that pension spending is crowding out government services. Others maintain that serious pension problems are limited to a few governments.



For this project, researchers analyzed a new dataset of the annual pension expenditures of over 400 municipalities and counties from 2005 to 2016. They find that pension expenditures have risen almost everywhere, but that there is significant variation in that growth. **(Lead Researcher: Faculty Director, Professor Sarah Anzia)**

Paper: Pensions in the Trenches: How Pension Spending is Affecting U.S. Local Government

CALIFORNIA K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCE

How can we better assist school districts at-risk of insolvency in California?

Researchers for this project are conducting an in-depth analysis of California’s school districts at-risk of financial insolvency. This project is leveraging a detailed and comprehensive statewide dataset of revenue and expenditures for California’s K-12 school districts. Researchers are aiming to create a predictive school finance model to assess how new state funding or changes in tax law would impact the financial sustainability of school districts. **(Lead Researchers: Erin Heys and Tom Lindman)**

DISTRIBUTIONAL IMPACT OF THE CALIFORNIA RENTER’S CREDIT

Are young adults treated equitably by California’s suite of housing subsidy programs?

With the cost of housing in California continuing to skyrocket, researchers are leveraging state-level tax and Census data to develop a robust microsimulation model that will directly quantify the impact of state housing programs on different age groups. The project will assess the degree to which these programs alleviate the burden of rent on different age groups, as well as the differential generational impact of state housing assistance, like the Home Mortgage Interest Deduction. **(Lead Researcher: Kara Segal)**

➔ Economic and Social Change

THE LOST GENERATION? SCARRING AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

Are the employment prospects of new college graduates permanently harmed by the Great Recession?

The Great Recession, starting in December 2007, was one of the worst economic contractions in generations. The economy experienced significant increases in the number of people looking for but unable to find employment. This project investigates the potentially long-term impact of recessions on the labor market prospects of young college graduates, with a focus on the group of Millennials harmed most recently by the Great Recession. (Lead Researcher: Faculty Affiliate, Professor Jesse Rothstein)

Working Paper: The Lost Generation? Scarring after the Great Recession

YOUNG ADULTS IN POVERTY

How have young adult poverty rates changed in recent decades relative to other age groups?

This research concludes that the number of young people (ages 18-24) living in poverty has increased over the last several decades, with young adults among the most poverty-prone age groups since the onset of

the Great Recession. Researchers find that a lack of a social safety net for 18-24-year-olds is a major factor in young adult poverty. (Lead Researcher: James Hawkins)

Publication: The Rise of Young Adult Poverty in the US

ECONOMIC MOBILITY INDEX

How did the Great Recession affect the economic trajectory of Millennials?

For this project, researchers produced an Economic Opportunity Index to better measure the economic mobility of young people during and after the Great Recession. The Index measures changes in key indicators including college education, health insurance, employment, affordable housing, and income from 2007 until 2016. In 2019, researchers modified the index to focus specifically on the well-being of young Californians and to analyze policies that have the potential to help them recover from the Great Recession. (Lead Researchers: James Hawkins and Erin Heys)

Publication: The Generational Squeeze: Young Californians' Financial Outlook in the Wake of the Great Recession

➔ The Lived Experience of Young Adults

MENTAL HEALTH ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

What are the causes and consequences of the rise in anxiety among Millennials and Gen Z?

As the first generation to come of age in the wake of the 2008 recession, and as a generation still grappling with increased economic uncertainty and worsening financial prospects, Millennials are experiencing anxiety like no other generation. But just how bad is this problem? Researchers analyzed trends in anxiety experienced by undergraduate students on college campuses across the United States, with a focus on the University of California system. (Lead Researcher: Professor Richard Scheffler)

Publication: Anxiety Disorder on College Campuses: The New Epidemic

CRISIS TEXT LINE

How can we better assist crisis counselors in their efforts to help those with mental health issues?

For this project, researchers are partnering with Crisis Text Line, an organization that trains young adults as crisis counselors who communicate via text message to those in crisis. The aim of the research is to better understand how to support the crisis counselors as well as to measure how volunteering as a crisis counselor influences perceptions about government investments in mental health services. (Lead Researcher: Faculty Affiliate, Professor Elizabeth Linos)



Political Engagement

YOUTH SERVICE AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Does participation in Teach for America cultivate greater civic engagement?

This project looks at Teach for America (TfA)—a program that places recent college graduates as teachers in low-income schools—to determine whether the program cultivates democratic citizens. This work analyzes a database of TfA applicants, looking for differences between those who were barely accepted and barely rejected from the program. Using this sample and design, Mo’s research seeks to determine if a youth service program like TfA can cultivate greater civic engagement, political efficacy and knowledge, and social and public trust. **(Lead Researcher: Faculty Affiliate, Assistant Professor Cecilia Mo)**

HOUSING & YOUTH VOTING BEHAVIOR

Can greater mobility among young people explain their low voter turnout?

It is well known that young people vote at lower rates than middle-aged and older Americans, both

in presidential and midterm elections. Persistent lower turnout among young people may reduce their political voice and thus their political impact. Understanding the reasons behind this low turnout could increase the political power and voice of younger generations. For this project, researchers are examining how patterns in mobility are connected with young people’s voting behavior. **(Lead Researcher: Visiting Scholar, Seva Rodnyansky)**

GOVERN FOR AMERICA

Do public sector jobs change political attitudes among the young?

In collaboration with Govern for America—a non-profit that connects college graduates with public sector jobs—researchers are following young job applicants to measure how experiencing a government job affects young people’s attitudes toward the role of government and public service. **(Lead Researcher: Faculty Affiliate, Professor Elizabeth Linos)**



Policy and Engagement

Events

HOUSING POLICY SPEAKER SERIES

We partnered with the Turner Center on Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley to host a speaker series covering California's housing crisis. The series took place during Spring 2019 at the Goldman School of Public Policy. Over the course of the spring, over 300 students, faculty, industry representatives, and community members engaged in conversation with invited panelists.

FEBRUARY 7, 2019

Who owns housing policy in CA? State vs. local regulatory regimes

MARCH 7, 2019

Why does it cost so much to build in the Bay Area?

APRIL 4, 2019

Environmental sustainability & housing in California

MAY 2, 2019

Health, Equity, and Housing

A GENERATION UNDER PRESSURE: TALKING MENTAL HEALTH AT UC BERKELEY, APRIL 18, 2019

The Institute sponsored a campus-wide mental health event with UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ. Over 400 individuals attended the event, with strong turnout from students, campus administrators, and community members. The event was covered by the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *DailyCal*.



From left: Kena Hazelwood-Carter (former president of the Graduate Assembly), Sam Ku (Internal Director, ASUC Mental Health Commission), UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ, Guy Nicolette (Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Health Services)



“There’s this really common narrative of villainizing social media as a cause of anxiety or other mental health issues, when in fact it’s just a tool...it’s not that the social media is the causal factor, it’s that the institutions that we’re living in push students to feel this way and then they go online to voice what they need or what they’re feeling.”

—Sam Ku, Internal Director, ASUC Mental Health Commission

Strategic Communications

PODCAST :: TALK POLICY TO ME Because #policyispersonal



The Institute's podcast – *Talk Policy to Me* – is in the middle of its third season. The podcast features young alumni, policymakers, and advocates, engaging in conversations about public policy and its impact on people's lives. The podcast

is a bi-weekly program featuring several student hosts discussing the most critical policy stories of the day, in a way that is digestible to the average listener.

SEASON 2

- Episode 201: Talking Implicit Bias in Policing
- Episode 202: Talking Policing and Criminal Justice
- Episode 203: Talking Food Policy
- Episode 204: Talking Elections
- Episode 205: Talking Housing Re-segregation
- Episode 206: Talking Dockless Scooters
- Episode 207: Talking UBI, part 1
- Episode 208: Talking UBI, part 2
- Episode 209: Talking Title IX
- Episode 210: Talking the CA Housing Crisis
- Episode 211: Talking UBI, part 3
- Episode 212: Talking Carbon Footprinting
- Special Edition Episode: Talking about Talking Policy
- Episode 213: Talking Carbon Footprinting, Part 2
- Episode 214: Talking Weed Policy



Episode 215: Talking Public Goods

Episode 216: Talking Basic Needs

SEASON 3

- Episode 301: Talking Policy Design
- Episode 302: Talking School Integration
- Episode 303: Talking Human-Centered Design
- Episode 304: Talking Tax Justice
- Episode 305: Talking Anti-Racist Transportation Policy
- Episode 306: Holiday Roundtable!



Talk Policy to Me student hosts from left: Reem Rayef, Sarah Edwards, Colleen Pulawski, Khalid Kaldi, Spencer Bowen

NEWSLETTER



In the News

Selected Media Coverage

EducationNext

**WINTER 2020
EDUCATION NEXT**

How Teach for America affects beliefs about education

CAL MATTERS
CALIFORNIA EXPLAINED

8/28/19 CALMATTERS

Lawmakers must do more to fund mental health care at the University of California. Here's how to get the money

MENTAL FLOSS

**6/26/2019
MENTAL FLOSS**

26 amazing facts about millennials

**THE DAILY
CALIFORNIAN**
DAILYCAL.ORG

6/7/19 DAILYCAL

Young adults among most 'poverty-prone' age groups, UC Berkeley research center finds

BUSTLE

6/7/19 BUSTLE

Magazine Statistics on young adults & poverty show a startling trend over the past decade

VICE

6/7/19 VICE NEWS

Young People are Poorer Than Ever and Government Programs Are Failing Them

**Berkeley
News**

**6/5/19 BERKELEY
NEWS**

Number of young people facing poverty has increased over the last decade

**yahoo!
finance**

**5/25/19 YAHOO
FINANCE**

Why bad parents and tech may be to blame for anxious millennials

**San Francisco
Chronicle**

4/22/19 SF CHRONICLE

Rising anxiety on campuses linked to finances, phones in UC Berkeley study

**THE DAILY
CALIFORNIAN**
DAILYCAL.ORG

4/19/19 DAILY CAL

Panelists, study expose culture of anxiety at UC Berkeley

salon

3/12/2019 SALON

Here's how Millennials' \$1 trillion in debt is affecting their lives

Our Team



Sarah Anzia
FACULTY DIRECTOR

Sarah Anzia is an Associate Professor with a shared appointment in Berkeley's Political Science department and the Goldman School of Public Policy. She is a Political Scientist who studies American politics with a focus on state and local government, elections, interest groups, political parties, and public policy. Her book, *Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups*, examines how the timing of elections can be manipulated to affect both voter turnout and the composition of the electorate, which, in turn, affects election outcomes and public policy. She also studies the role of government employees and public-sector unions in elections and policymaking in the U.S. In addition, she has written about the politics of public pensions, women in politics, the historical development of electoral institutions, and the power of political party leaders in state legislatures. She has a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University and an M.P.P. from the Harris School at the University of Chicago.



Sarah Swanbeck
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sarah Swanbeck is a public policy analyst with expertise in California state and local governance and budget issues. She previously worked in Legislative Affairs for California Common Cause, a nonprofit that advocates for more open, honest, and accountable government. While at Common Cause, she successfully advocated for important changes to the state's campaign finance laws as well as the first ever substantive reform to California's century-old initiative process. Outside the realm of California politics, Sarah has spent years working as a policy analyst on both state and local issues. As an analyst for the Controller in San Francisco, she worked with a range of city departments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their services. She also previously worked for the Public Policy Institute of California and the California Public Utilities Commission on state energy and water policy. She holds an MPP from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley and a BA in Economics from Wellesley College.



Erin Heys
POLICY DIRECTOR

Erin Heys recently completed a PhD program in Education Policy at Berkeley. Her dissertation research examined policy paradigms in education with a focus on the school accountability debate. While at Berkeley, Erin was engaged with student organizations on campus and was the federal legislative director for the Graduate Assembly. She also worked for the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment at Berkeley to promote faculty research on topics related to the labor market and the economy. Prior to graduate school, Erin spent several years working for the nonprofit evaluation firm, MDRC, where she was a qualitative researcher and studied programs to improve student access and success at community colleges. In addition to her PhD, Erin holds a Master's degree in Education from Berkeley, and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Minnesota.



James Hawkins
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

James Hawkins is a policy researcher with experience in environmental and economic policy. His interests at the Institute include examining public policies designed to expand opportunities for young people in today's labor market, as well as tomorrow's. During his graduate studies, James completed work spanning efforts to improve voter knowledge of electoral candidates and an evaluation of potential policies for large expansions of the social safety net. During his tenure at the environmental non-profit Heal the Ocean, he led policy campaigns focused on building the case for recycled water as a green water supply alternative. He received his BA in Political Science and Environmental Studies from UC Santa Barbara and his MPP from UC Berkeley.



Millennials are facing multiple economic pressures, none more acute than the massive rise in student debt. Unfortunately, this isn't the only form of economic insecurity faced by this generation, who are contending with stagnant wages, the increased cost of childcare, and a lack of opportunities to build wealth in the same manner as previous generations. Fortunately, public policy helped create these problems, and public policy can lead us out of them."

—Mark Huelsman, Senior Policy Analyst, Demos



From top clockwise: James Hawkins (Associate Director), Sarah Swanbeck (Executive Director), Erin Heys (Policy Director); Student participants at the Institute's annual Millennial Summit; Faculty Director, Associate Professor Sarah Anzia; Student participants at the Institute's annual Millennial Summit

The Year Ahead

In 2020, we will expand our research agenda, partnerships, and strategic engagement in the following key areas:

ADVISORY BOARD

In the spring of 2020, the Institute will announce a new advisory board to guide our research and policy agenda. The advisors are established young leaders in government, research, and youth advocacy in California and nationally who bring a wealth of knowledge about the challenges that young adults face in the modern economy and the policy solutions that may help offset generational inequalities. As experts in state policy, research, and youth engagement, the advisory board members will serve as strategic partners, providing professional expertise and guidance to develop the Institute's research agenda, to define a policy agenda that invests in young adults, and to broaden our network of youth organizers working to enact social change.

INCOME SUPPORT MODEL

In 2020 we will launch a year-long project to create a microsimulation model that evaluates the predicted effects of alternative forms of income support policies on different subgroups, including low-income individuals and young adults. The model will assess three income support programs with the potential to improve economic outcomes: a universal income guarantee, a negative income tax, and an earned income subsidy. These programs represent three primary forms of cash transfer policies—universal, means-tested, and in-work subsidy—that have potential to improve financial stability, health, and quality of life. The project will be an important addition to our growing body of research that aims to understand how the social safety net might better target young adults in poverty.



POLL ON YOUNG ADULT VOTING BEHAVIOR

Young adults today participate in elections at much lower rates than other generations. This pattern of low turnout among young people stands to have important consequences for public policy in the coming decades. Despite stark differences in generational voting behavior, existing polls suggest that young people want more from government, with preferences for broadening the social safety net and shifting toward more universal programs and services. There is a lot we still do not understand about the disconnect between what young people want from government and their low voter turnout. This raises important questions that we intend to answer with this poll: What exactly do young people (in comparison to older generations) want from government programs and services? What groups do they think deserve to receive government services and benefits, and under what conditions should they receive those benefits? And how do these beliefs relate to their voting behavior?



NEW WEBSITE AND BRAND

In early 2020 the Institute will launch a new, stand-alone website as well as a new brand identity. The new visual identity will reflect how we have grown and evolved as an organization and will help bring clarity to who we are and where we want to go. The website will continue to feature our original research, policy briefs, event videos, and podcast episodes.

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