

The DAC Center is a new CSU center dedicated to supporting water-related technical assistance and capacity building in disadvantaged communities throughout California. This will be accomplished through applied research teams consisting of professional staff, faculty, and paid student interns. Teams will be recruited across the California Public Higher Education system and in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and industry partners.

**Goals:**

- Community resiliency and sustainability
- Student experiential learning
- Partnerships



**CSU** The California State University  
WATER RESOURCES AND POLICY INITIATIVES

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<http://www.calstate.edu/water/disadvantage.shtml>

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## California State University Disadvantaged Communities Center (DAC Center)



“Serving communities and training our next generation of water leaders.”

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## Background

In California, there is a pressing need for technical assistance and capacity building in rural and urban economically disadvantaged communities (DACs) facing drinking water insecurity as the drought worsens their already-dire conditions of water quality and supply. The California Public Higher Education system—University of California (UC), California Community Colleges (CCC), and California State University (CSU)—has a great capacity to meet this increasing need through our existing administrative structure, students and faculty, external partnerships, statewide geography, and a long history of experience in working with DACs.

The CSU Water Resources and Policy Initiatives and its partners are forming the Disadvantaged Communities Center (DAC Center), a new CSU system center dedicated to supporting water-related technical assistance and capacity building in DACs throughout California. The CSU Chancellor's Office supports the establishment of this system-wide center that will focus on providing technical, financial, managerial and organizational assistance to DACs.

## Framework

The DAC Center will be engaging with partners from the three California public institutions of higher education, California state government, industry, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In collaboration with the expertise of industry and NGO partners, faculty and student research teams will be recruited across the California Public Higher Education system to engage in identifying and implementing solutions to the various water issues each DAC faces.

These academic research teams will represent expertise from various fields—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), political science, business, and design to name a few. Student recruitment will be accomplished by the academic support programs Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and Latino Education and Advocacy Days (LEAD).

One of our goals is to involve underrepresented students in STEM and in other participating disciplines. This will be an important opportunity for our students to gain valuable experiential learning that will benefit them as the next generation of water leaders.

Furthermore, many of our students come from the very communities we are aiming to serve; having these students bring their skill sets back into their own communities will help build trust, resiliency, and sustainability.

Our strategy of long-term team embedding is designed to assist communities toward resiliency, so they will ideally not have to rely on these services in the future. As a result, our goals reach beyond water; we are concerned with improvements in quality of life—a combination of environmental, health, and economic justice.

Additionally, the DAC Center will develop and refine the body of knowledge regarding California DACs such as refining CalEPA's CalEnviroScreen 2.0 and developing and combining multiple community data sources, e.g. public health, education outcomes, and other quality of life indicators. This data will be used to establish baseline measurements to indicate quality of life improvements for DACs after assistance. Such measurements will help the state determine the effectiveness of the substantial investments in these communities.

### Current Partners:



### Pillars:

- Student-Centered Learning
- Team Embedding
- Partnerships
- Observation & Measurements