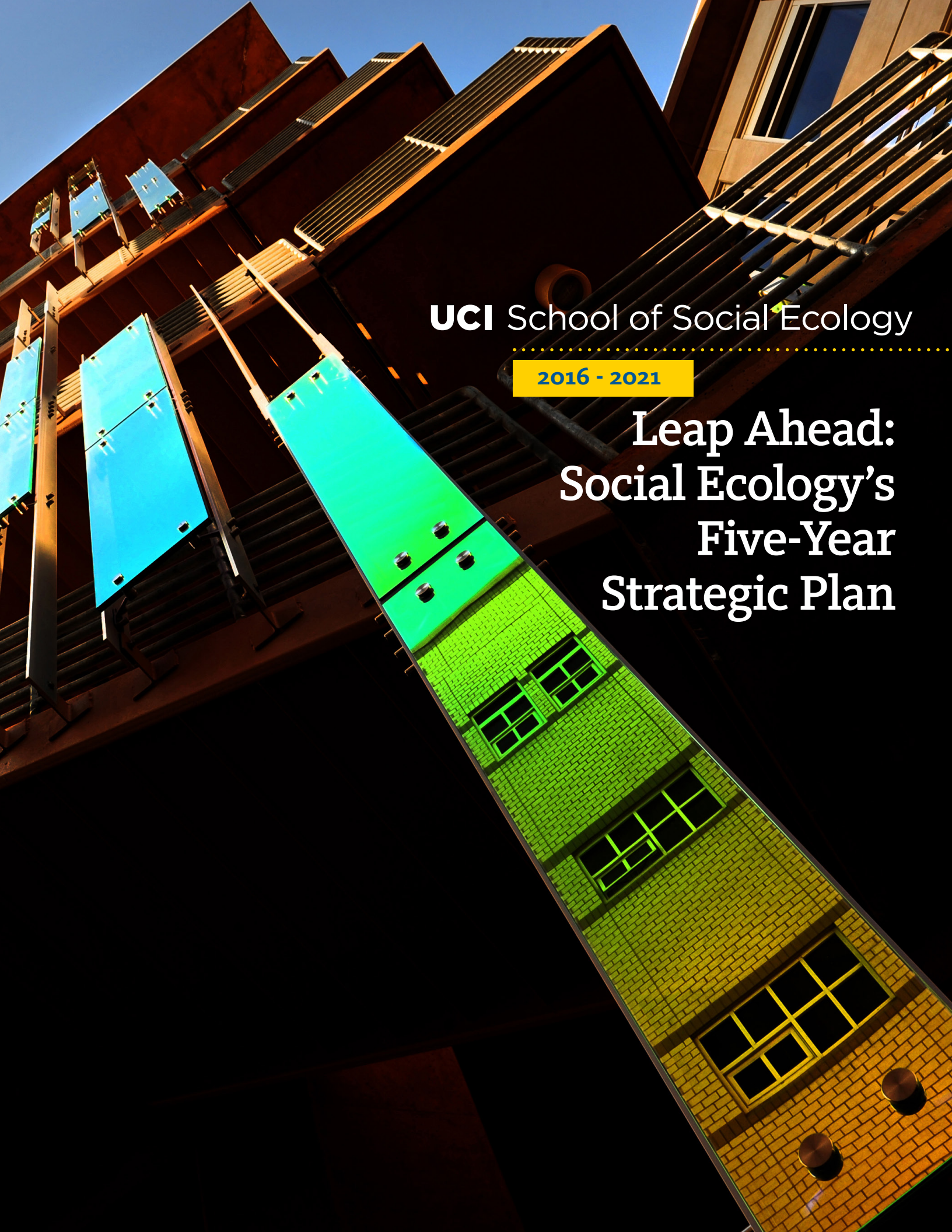

UCI School of Social Ecology

2016 - 2021

Leap Ahead: Social Ecology's Five-Year Strategic Plan

Social Ecology

2,500+	Undergrad Students
350+	Graduate Students
20,000+	Alumni
71	Faculty
50	Staff
5	Research Centers
1	Institute

To learn more, visit:
www.socialecology.uci.edu

Our Vision

Our vision is to be the best interdisciplinary school in the nation and internationally, where the brightest scholars and students conduct research on pressing social and environmental problems in order to strengthen communities and improve lives. Across our three departments, we produce transformative research addressing real-world problems and challenges, provide exceptional learning experiences for students that equip them with skills to succeed personally and professionally, and translate our work to serve stakeholders throughout California, across the nation, and around the world.

Our Plan

For more than 40 years, Social Ecology has emphasized interdisciplinary research, team science, community-engaged scholarship, and science that matters. We have steadily expanded our faculty and student body, increased research expenditures, launched innovative online course offerings and degree programs, enhanced our pioneering 100-hour field study program, improved support and retention programs for students, and created and participated in a variety of school and campus-wide centers and institutes.

On all of these fronts we will continue to grow and innovate. Our goal in the next five years is to increase our full-time faculty from 71 to 85, our total undergraduate enrollment from 2,568 to 3,081, and our total graduate enrollment from 365 to 438, representing approximately 20% growth across the board. We further plan to grow the Dean's Excellence Fund to Enhance Undergraduate Education, increase field study opportunities, broaden the use of educational technology and online learning tools, and foster an environment that promotes inclusive excellence and expands opportunities for all.

As we move forward, we also face new challenges. We must prepare students to navigate a global economy that requires technical skills, critical thinking, leadership, empathy and civic engagement. Our research must focus not only on understanding social and environmental problems, but also on solving them. UCI can and should be an anchor institution for Orange County, playing a critical role working with local partners to strengthen communities and improve lives. New mechanisms to translate scientific advances into real-world solutions must be developed and implemented in our region and in the State of California, as well as nationally and internationally. Against a backdrop of declining state funding, we must increase research expenditures, develop new funding streams, work closely with alumni and supporters of our School, and promote academic entrepreneurship and innovation.

Research Hubs:

Healthy People and Places
Crime Prevention and Social Justice
Technology and Human Potential

To accomplish these goals, we will emphasize three pillars of action over the next five years: Science Driving Solutions, The Global Agenda, and Community-Embedded Research and Teaching.

Three Pillars of Action

Science Driving Solutions

Social Ecology emphasizes science-driven solutions to important social and environmental problems. Pressing concerns such as poverty, crime and violence, social justice, health and well-being, and sustainable cities can best be addressed through a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach.

To meet this challenge, we have identified three main Research Hubs:

- ***Healthy People and Places***
- ***Crime Prevention and Social Justice***
- ***Technology and Human Potential***

We plan to reorganize existing centers and institutes to fit within these thematic areas and develop new institutes to complement this work. We also are exploring a number of high visibility activities to highlight our focus on solutions including:

- Rebranding our website and communications strategy to reflect a science-to-solutions focus
- Working with faculty to prepare 2-minute videos and brief "impact statements" describing how their work influences people and communities
- Implementing a "Solutions Challenge" prize competition for graduate students and faculty to develop empirically-driven, sustainable solutions to local grand challenges
- Developing an annual Smart Solutions conference within each of the thematic areas

"Social Ecology emphasizes science driving solutions to important social and environmental problems – in areas such as social justice, human rights, crime and violence, healthy development, well-being, poverty alleviation and sustainable cities."

—Nancy Guerra, Dean

The Global Agenda

Universities increasingly are embracing a global perspective, and students and faculty regularly seek out these opportunities. Not only can an international focus help students prepare to succeed in an increasingly global economy, it also can serve as a recruitment tool for undergraduate and graduate students. To underscore the importance of our global goals, we have just appointed our first Associate Dean for International Programs. We recently developed an international field study site in La Paz, Mexico, where students and faculty work together on research and projects related to sustainability, community development, and social justice. We plan to expand our global reach in a number of other ways including:

- Adding 2-3 international field study sites within the next 5 years
- Submitting applications to host international scholars
- Developing graduate study abroad opportunities
- Participating in a multi-campus Master's degree in Global Human Rights

Community-Embedded Research and Teaching

Social Ecology is a leader in engaged scholarship, and we will continue translating and incorporating research and teaching into policy and practice. Toward this end, we plan to enlist students, faculty, and alumni in helping us increase our integration in community settings through various activities including:

- Developing a non-residential Core Social Ecology Ph.D. for working professionals
- Developing a new Ph.D. in Clinical and Prevention Science that will serve local communities
- Designing practical certificate and online credential programs
- Establishing a "Solutions Co-Laboratory" in Orange County that connects students, faculty, policy makers, agencies, and citizens to address pressing concerns

UCI's Ten-Year Strategic Plan

LEAP AHEAD, our strategic plan, aligns with the UCI campus-wide ten-year strategic plan released in February 2016. The campus plan highlights four pillars of action:

- **Growth that makes a difference**—expanding faculty, increasing research expenditures, promoting health, building platforms for convergence science, addressing grand challenges, and integrating arts and humanities across all aspects of campus life.
- **First in class**—making UCI a first choice campus, fostering excellence in teaching and learning, integrating technological advances, promoting learning beyond the classroom, opening doors for students, and enhancing the campus-wide honors program.
- **Great partners**—collaborating with community partners in Orange County and beyond, building strong alumni networks, and translating discoveries and innovations to affect positive community change.
- **New paths for our brilliant future**—developing a sustainable financial plan, increasing philanthropic support, engaging and reward staff, and building a high quality physical and technological infrastructure.

Contact Us

UCI School of Social Ecology
5300 Social and Behavioral Sciences Gateway
Irvine, CA 92697-7050

www.socialecology.uci.edu
secomm@uci.edu