

*Community and University: Case Studies and Commentary on
University of California Cooperative Extension Interventions*

California Communities Program, University of California, Davis
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How university educators and researchers tackle community problems is the focus of this new book. Based on case studies of projects in six different California regions, it examines both the risks and opportunities involved in applying university expertise to controversial local issues. Several commentaries compare the six cases and offer general lessons about making the transition from traditional disciplinary knowledge to the less structured and predictable world of local conflict.

Among the risks discussed in this analysis are the career uncertainties faced by university people, especially those trained in the laboratory sciences, who get involved in public issues that are not amenable to the application of scientific information and principles. On the positive side is the realization that universities--especially land grant institutions--have the obligation to direct their knowledge and skills to off-campus problems.

Much of the book is focused on the strategies for engaging effectively in public policy work at the community level, including aspects of project selection, timing, and collaboration with local actors. The case studies were written by county advisors and campus specialists of the University of California Cooperative Extension who directed recent projects. The community issues they describe deal with water quality, farm animal facility siting, public lands, Hispanic leadership, military base reuse, and Native-American reservations.

The California Communities Program provides direction and focus for UC Cooperative Extension's research and outreach work in the area of community development. The aim is to strengthen the leadership capabilities of local citizens, fortify community self-governance, and enhance local and regional economies.

About the authors

David Campbell is a political scientist who serves as Director of the California Communities Program in the Human and Community Development Department at UC Davis. His research examines the intersection between public policy and community development processes at the local level--focusing on governance, citizenship, and economic development. He is lead investigator on CCP's six county comparative study of welfare reform implementation, and is also conducting evaluations of community development initiatives in Merced and Lassen counties. Between 1990 and 1996 he taught courses in local government and public administration at UC Davis. He can be reached at dave.c.campbell@ucdavis.edu; phone is 530/754-4328.

Gail Feenstra is the food systems coordinator at the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. She coordinates SAREP's Community Development and Public Policy Program which includes managing SAREP's community development and public policy grants, conducting applied and evaluative research that strengthens community development efforts and coordinating education and outreach to community-based groups to build their capacity and leadership skills. Gail is also a nutritionist with a background in nutrition education. Her work focuses on creative ways to strengthen the connections between producers and consumers, and between urban and rural communities through participation in sustainable, community food systems. She can

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