

UC SANTA BARBARA

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A Mobilizing Force of One

If you want to build a political movement that draws an army of activists, you should probably call [Hahrie Han](#). An associate professor of political science at UC Santa Barbara, she is one of the nation's premier researchers on grass-roots engagement in environmental and political issues.

And she's about to become UCSB's newest holder of an endowed chair. Han will be installed as the Anton Vonk Chair in Environmental Politics in an investiture ceremony Friday, March 4. The chair was endowed by the late Anton Vonk and his wife, Diane Boss.

"I am deeply honored," Han said. "An endowed chair is an enormous privilege for any faculty member, but I feel especially privileged to have the opportunity to extend the legacy of Anton Vonk and Diane Boss — and to do this in partnership with such distinguished colleagues at UCSB who are all working on the front-lines of solving environmental problems."

Han, who came to UCSB from Wellesley College in 2015, specializes in the convergence of policy and activism, and the role that community associations play in mobilizing public participation. She has authored three books and numerous papers that explore activism and organization.

"Solving political problems is not just about designing the right policy, but also about figuring out how to build the political will to enact those policies" Han explained. "My research asks, 'How do you build that political will? How do you generate public

pressure, and grassroots engagement?’ ”

Bruce Bimber, professor and chair of UCSB’s [Department of Political Science](#), said Han’s expertise dovetails nicely with the department’s work on the environment. “The political science department has made a priority of studying and teaching about the politics of the environment,” he said. “We have been building our strength in this area over the years, and UCSB now has the largest group of political scientists working on the environment of any university in the country. Professor Han’s arrival here is one of the capstones of our effort to be a national leader in environmental politics. She is a well-known and widely respected scholar and we are delighted she is now part of our community.”

Part of the appeal of UCSB, Han said, was the university’s reputation for interdisciplinary research. “One of the unique things about a place like UCSB is that it supports faculty doing problem-driven work, meaning work that is about solving real problems out there in the world, but also making sure that the work is still held to the highest standards of academic and disciplinary rigor,” she said. “A lot of places will go too far emphasizing one direction or the other, and UCSB is really rare in being able to hold the balance between those two things.”

Han received her Ph.D. in American politics from Stanford University and her bachelor’s degree in American history and literature from Harvard University.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.