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Teaching Toward the Future

Tine Falk Sloan, director of the Teacher Education Program (TEP) at UC Santa Barbara's [Gevirtz Graduate School of Education](#), is one of three recipients of the 2017 President's Research Catalyst Awards presented by UC President Janet Napolitano.

The awards total more than \$2 million and involve faculty members and students from across the UC system with lead campuses at UCSB, UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz. The recipients were selected from a pool of more than 100 proposed projects.

With funding of \$1.5 million, UCSB's Sloan will lead a nine-campus research consortium focused on teacher preparation and training. Working with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the California State University system and the California Department of Education, the consortium will research the efficacy of teacher preparation programs; create an infrastructure for statewide data collection; and serve the state through research on policy implementation. In addition, it will develop cross-campus doctoral programs in teacher education scholarship. By helping to develop research-informed policy and training in the K-12 arena, UC scholarship will also help inform national debates about improving academic outcomes across the U.S.

"California is trying to strengthen the quality of new teachers, while also trying to ease a severe teacher shortage, particularly in the STEM areas," Sloan said. "These competing agendas create a pressing need for well-informed policy. Unfortunately, the state does not have reliable data for this purpose, hence the center's work will

begin with merging several state and university systems's databases in order to answer basic questions related to the efficacy of program pathways. It will simultaneously examine specific practices for preparing teachers and develop systemwide programs for doctoral students in teacher education research and practice."

The success of such a large endeavor needs systemwide participation to validate results in different geographical contexts, Sloan continued. "It also requires partnerships with our CSU and independent college systems, as well as our state agencies. This is the work UC should be doing in service to the state. The commitment from over 60 researchers on nine campuses, and now the financial commitment from the Office of the President, is truly remarkable."

Jeffrey Milem, dean of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, lauded the award. "At a time when schooling and teachers are often under attack, it's heartening to see the UC and President Napolitano recognize the need to study — rigorously — how we train future generations of teachers," he said. "It also is rewarding to see the fine work of UCSB's Teacher Education Program and Tine Sloan recognized. After all, the Governor's State Educator Excellence Task Force has hailed TEP as a model program for the state of California. Our school will proudly lead the nine-campus research consortium that no doubt will revolutionize the way we prepare teachers."

Other recipients of President's Research Catalyst Awards include UC Santa Cruz anthropologist Lars Fehren-Schmitz and UC Davis conservation biologist Rahel Sollman. Fehren-Schmitz will lead a project to expand work being done by that campus's Human Paleogenomics Lab, with particular emphasis on graduate student training in this emerging field. By analyzing DNA from ancient humans, pathogens and other genomes, the lab looks to understand how the twin forces of culture and biology have shaped human genomic diversity, demography and health.

Sollman will lead a project studying the impacts of megafires on the food web network and pollination networks. Better understanding of how megafires affect forest ecology is an increasingly urgent question in California and the Western United States. Sollman will lead an effort that draws on expertise at UC Davis, UCSB and UC Berkeley and works closely with the U.S. Forest Service to analyze the ecological disruption of megafires and their impact on ecosystem integrity.

Launched by Napolitano in 2014, the President's Research Catalyst Awards aim to foster multicampus, interdisciplinary research in areas of strategic importance to California and the world. Since its inception, the program has provided nearly \$10 million for research focused on climate change, cultural preservation, drought and basic science, among others, and afforded research opportunities for 50 UC faculty members, nearly five-dozen graduate students and 20 undergraduates.

Funding for the Catalyst Awards comes from the UC President's endowment funds, which support systemwide initiatives and projects. A list of previous recipients can be found at <http://ucop.edu/research-initiatives/programs/catalyst-awards>.

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.