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# Gevirtz School launches undergraduate education major

UC Santa Barbara's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education is expanding its curriculum to offer, for the first time, an undergraduate major. The all-new Bachelor of Arts four-year degree, Education and Society, will draw teaching talent from a diverse range of faculty expertise to meet increasing student demand on campus and across the UC system.

The new major, homebased in the Department of Education, is expected to draw considerable interest among undergraduates, according to professor and chair Tarek Azzam. For more than a decade, he said, the department's two related minors — Educational Studies and Science and Mathematics Education — have experienced steady enrollment and increased interest. Education and Society will also level-up UCSB with six UC campuses that offer similar undergraduate majors.

"We've seen a lot of positive feedback and growth around the idea," said Azzam, who plans to teach two classes in the new major, Education Research in an Informed Society and Evaluating Education Policies and Programs.

The new major, Azzam added, is not intended for undergraduates seeking to prepare for immediate entry to preK-12 teaching. It can, however, help develop and hone knowledge and skills needed for classroom instruction and education as a field of study and practice. The major also lays the groundwork for careers in public policy, the justice system, advocacy, educational research and scholarship, STEM and ecology and the human environment, among many other fields.

“We believe that the study of education is not something that’s only for prospective educators,” said teaching professor and undergraduate faculty director Jason Duque. “Education is a broad, interdisciplinary domain for scholars, policymakers, community leaders, legal experts and, yes, teachers, to learn and practice. Education is a focal point for both intellectual attention and civic life.”

“It’s not that we don’t want students who want to be teachers to pursue our major,” he added, “it’s that the study of education offers so much more.”

Core courses in the major are organized into three areas: learning and teaching; culture and communities and policy and institutions. Beyond those courses, students will be able to pursue more focused “advanced pathways,” which include a combination of traditional classroom-based courses and practicum-based experiences.

The new major is grounded in the Gevirtz School’s strategic vision to “be a leader in addressing pressing social justice issues through interdisciplinary collaborations . . . in educational and applied psychological research, teaching, and service,” according to the finalized proposal. “Our faculty bring strengths in human development; psychological assessment; education and social policy; diversity, equity and inclusion; program evaluation; quantitative and qualitative research methods; sociology and anthropology of education; STEM education; language development; community engagement and teacher education.”

With early iterations dating back more than five years, Education and Society was finetuned and greenlit by Academic Senate committees and given its final approval by the Faculty Legislature in May. Prospective first-year students will be able to apply in fall 2026. Classes will begin in fall 2027.

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## 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.