



CENTER FOR SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

We envision a world without social inequity and systemic disenfranchisement, where opportunities and resources are more evenly distributed.

The mission of the Center for Social Solutions (CSS) is to cultivate collaboration, leadership, and scholarship in order to create a more equitable and inclusive world. In this way, the Center is a critical component of LSA's vision of a diverse intellectual community working to reimagine the world and create positive, purposeful change.

We seek to identify, develop, and implement scalable, data-driven solutions that address societal inequities. In this spirit, our four founding initiatives—diversity and democracy, the impact of slavery, water security, and the future of work—aim to redress systemic injustices through interdisciplinary research and educational outreach.

The Center recognizes common threads of vulnerability and inequity throughout each focus area and acknowledges that to address one issue is to address, in some way, all of them. Issues of societal inequities are often nebulous and abstract; in specifying our scope to these tangible focus areas, we are mobilizing both academics and community members to address pressing societal challenges.

Our commitment to the promotion of diversity and equity in the world starts at home. As a truly interdisciplinary team, the Center for Social Solutions embodies the LSA ideals of exploration, inclusion, and integrity. No two researchers, staff, or faculty at the Center have the same background, spanning from anthropology to environmental sciences; from public policy to linguistics; from sociology to history; and psychology to philanthropy.

Beyond academic disciplines, we firmly believe in the power of diverse lived experiences and the amplification of historically oppressed and traditionally excluded voices. We represent a multitude of racial and ethnic backgrounds, languages, and faiths all working toward the common goal of combating inequity and injustice. Creating such a future requires that we come to terms with the past. The Center works to identify gaps in research and practice, contemplate how to bridge these gaps, and develop programs and avenues to combat inequity and injustice.

PRIORITY GOALS

DIVERSITY

This fund expressly supports our Diversity and Democracy Initiative—including our founding project, Our Compelling Interests—which seeks to advance the understanding that diversity and inclusion are essential to sustaining democracy and a prosperous society. Other Diversity initiatives include our Academic Leadership Institute (ALI), which aims to increase the representation of rising higher education leaders who are committed to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including faculty of color. Your gift may support the ALI residential program for future presidents and provosts or the development of an annual award that would recognize individuals, teams or institutions that have taken significant steps to advance diversity.

SLAVERY

The fund for the Slavery and Its Aftermath Initiative sponsors our efforts to advance social awareness of the history of slavery and its influence on the continuation of slavery and other social issues we are confronting today. Your gift might enable the production and dissemination of facts about slavery, an initiative led by our director and founder, renowned U.S. historian Dr. Earl Lewis. Thanks to a recent grant from the Mellon Foundation, CSS is coordinating the work of nine higher educational institutions across the United States as they collaborate with community leaders in historical, educational, media, and cultural institutions to address reparations at the local level. The Center will engage graduate students in this effort, which we hope to expand to other regions of the U.S. after completion of the grant.



Our differences uniquely position us to explore the complexities of the issues we undertake and develop thoughtful, data-driven, and tangible solutions to real problems experienced by real people every day.



WATER

This fund finances the progress of our Water, Equity and Security Initiative, the goal of which is to address the challenge of mitigating disaster in predictably flood-prone areas by securing funding, regulation, and infrastructure to transfer surplus water to droughtstricken regions of the country. CSS is currently partnering with experts in environmental and water resource planning at the Urban Collaboratory and the Great Lakes Water Authority to address the socio-economic aspect of Real-Time Stormwater Control in Southeast Michigan. Your gift will empower our sociology and environmental science experts to convene an interdisciplinary team of engineers, city planners, tax experts, transportation analysts, and public policy experts that can expand the model to other areas encountering this pervasive issue.

WORK

The Future of Work Initiative fund underwrites our efforts to craft solutions as we probe the meaning and dignity of labor in a highly automated world. Previous and ongoing efforts to understand how work is changing globally have been largely disparate and undefined, resulting in much overlap but little discussion between institutions and industries. Recognizing a need for a centralized source and increased collaboration, the Center aims to develop resources that bring this vast—albeit largely siloed—network together. Contributions will support national convenings, educational tools, and projects that position the Center as the hub of interactive databases on global future of work projects. Such resources include scalable, collaborative solutions to changes in the make up of work, including better forecasting for future jobs and policy recommendations for training programs.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

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