

PACIFIC OAKS COLLEGE & CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

— 2020–2021 —

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT



PACIFIC OAKS
COLLEGE & CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

A word from the president of Pacific Oaks College & Children's School



When Jawaharlal Nehru, the champion of Indian independence, said, "Every little thing counts in a crisis," he was expressing a desire for peace, but this sentiment reminds us of the enduring importance of small acts in a time of great uncertainty.

At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, our reality at Pacific Oaks College & Children's School was no different than that at any other organization. We faced an unplanned disruption to our livelihoods and daily routines, which placed untold challenges before us.

In that moment of crisis, however, we quickly realized that the communities we serve depended on us to expand upon our work. We also realized that the values at the core of our mission provided a roadmap for how we would respond in a time of upheaval and greatly increased need.

As health directives shut down in-person learning, we took pride in our expertise in online instruction and were confident the quality of teaching would not be impacted. We knew that food insecurity was going to be an immediate challenge—we had systems in place and were prepared to expand to meet the need. And while information from health and government officials flowed daily from all levels, we established multilingual networks that permitted us to maintain avenues of communication with all members of our community.

Throughout the crisis, we remained moored in our longstanding commitment to social justice. And because of the importance we place on our core values, we were willing to take risks to support key programs and initiatives, including our Center for Community & Social Impact.

As the foundations of our society were rocked again by the murder of George Floyd, the Pacific Oaks community knew how to respond. Our anti-bias training starts with preschoolers at the Children's School and continues through adult programs to our alumni and local community groups. Fourteen hundred people participated in our first anti-bias training in July 2020, many of them educators. Imagine if each of them teaches what they learned to 10 people—our initiative will have reached 14,000 people.

While much of our impact on the faculty, staff, and students of Pacific Oaks and the community at large was driven by necessity, every little thing we did counted. And as we look forward, we are assured that we will have to do more. The need will never be less, only greater. The greater the need, the more responsibility we will be given.

Therefore, we offer this report with equal measures of self-assurance and humility as it reflects those things that we have always done well and those areas in which we continue to grow.

Dr. Jack Paduntin

President, Pacific Oaks College & Children's School

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Education that Makes an Impact

Pacific Oaks College is a nonprofit, regionally accredited higher education institution, offering California teacher credentialing programs and bachelor's and master's programs in education, human development, marriage and family therapy, social work, business and management, and more.

A HISTORY OF PRINCIPLED, PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

Throughout our history, Pacific Oaks has taken a leadership role in progressive initiatives in education. These are just a few of the College's major milestones with examples of how those investments in our people have paid dividends in our community.

1958

Pacific Oaks College is established to train educators to make an impact in their communities through successful careers in Early Childhood Education.

Pacific Oaks College graduates continue to have a broad influence on early childhood pedagogy in the schools and communities in which they teach.

1959

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) grants Pacific Oaks College initial accreditation. WASC Senior Colleges and Universities Commission has currently granted the College accreditation through 2024.

This institutional validation provides a continuing framework for ongoing areas of instruction as well as the development of new programs.



1986

Pacific Oaks adds an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy, branching out from a focus on education to impact individuals and families in a new context.

Today, the MFT program includes first-of-their-kind specializations that broaden the College's impact and educate culturally competent mental health professionals: Latinx Studies, African American Studies, Trauma Studies, and LGBTQIA+ Studies.

1989

Pacific Oaks' faculty and alumni were instrumental in creating "Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children," which introduces curriculum that empowers children and promotes critical thinking about bias.

Pacific Oaks College remains a leader in anti-bias education in the classroom and through community outreach. As the last year as shown, this expertise is needed as much as ever.

2010

To better serve its students and community, Pacific Oaks College becomes part of TCS Education System, with a mission to train change agents to serve local and global communities.

The relationship between TCS and Pacific Oaks College continues to grow and evolve as more schools have joined the System and expanded the educational horizons of the organization as a whole.

Defining Our Philosophy, Living Our Values

The mission of Pacific Oaks College is to remain firmly grounded in our social justice heritage while preparing students to be culturally intelligent agents of change serving diverse communities in the fields of human development, education, and related family studies. Over the past several months, this commitment has been more important than ever.

Throughout the extended health emergency and social unrest of 2020, Pacific Oaks faculty, staff, and students put the school's four core values of respect, diversity, social justice, and inclusion into action by stepping up to serve the school community and the surrounding areas with food, logistical, and educational assistance as well as opportunities for people to come together and share their thoughts and concerns about the state of race relations and other pressing societal issues.

Numbers That Count

8,500

alumni

1,200

current students

36.6

average age
of students

2 campus locations

in Pasadena and
San Jose—as well as a
robust online program

More than

30

academic programs

Engaging Communities in Need

Community engagement is an essential part of Pacific Oaks’ mission. The College provides multiple services within Pasadena and its surrounding communities, everything from curriculum development to food delivery for economically insecure families.

Anti-Bias Symposiums Counter Ignorance with Education

In a time of crisis, one of the best things any person or organization can do is lean into their unique areas of expertise or leadership in order to provide comfort and stability to those around them. For Pacific Oaks College & Children’s School, one of those longstanding areas of expertise was the development and promotion of anti-bias curriculums.

As part of its commitment to community engagement, Pacific Oaks College hosted a free Anti-Bias Education Series, with events in July 2020, November 2020, March 2021, and September 2021. Designed for professionals in early childhood education and the K-12 system, parents, nonprofit leaders, and members of the public interested in working to end systemic racism, these events welcomed more than 1,400 participants in total.

Part 1: “Fighting Against Racism” was convened by Pacific Oaks College in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the wave of civil unrest that swept the country.

Part 2: “A Multi-Generational Perspective” was divided into two presentations. The first was a “Kidsposium,” with a panel of parents

and grade school students. The second was a “Grandparent’s Roundtable,” which discussed effective tools for teaching respect, tolerance for differences, and coping with adverse situations.

Part 3: Hosted in partnership with Bay Area nonprofit The Parent Venture, “Opportunity Through Education,” led by edu-activist and author Dr. César A. Cruz, focused on the theme of gaining opportunity through education and activism.

Part 4: “Rooted in Criminal Justice Reform: Transforming Reentry,” featured Joe Paul, a seasoned reentry professional, and Tiffany Johnson, who was incarcerated for 16 years after experiencing traumatic abuse, discussed how to create an equitable and successful transition from incarceration to rejoining the community.

Living Up To Commitments

The Center for Community & Social Impact (CCSI), founded in 2018, works with communities to locate and dismantle injustices and inequities by empowering people to create effective and sustainable change.

The Center’s goals include developing strong and sustainable community partnerships, engaging in research and scholarship for

community impact and promoting service models for sustainable change.

Collaborate PASadena, funded by the city of Pasadena and housed under CCSI, is a support organization made up of individuals, organizations, and businesses serving the children of the cities of Pasadena, Altadena, and Sierra Madre. The organization oversees events and activities including African American Leaders of Tomorrow and the annual LevelUP youth conference.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the **Pasadena Unified School District**, CCSI provides educational and community support to schools, teachers, students, and families, including parent advocacy, literacy training, staff training and development, and trauma-informed teaching. Signature initiatives include:

- **The Student Success Collaborative**, which turns the notion of helping “underperforming” schools on its head. CCSI approaches curriculum, instruction, and student support as being directed toward a positive outcome, which, in turn, instills a positive attitude in the child.

- **Teacher Success Collaborative** teaches “restorative” approaches to empower educators to relate to children who have experienced poverty, unstable home life, and violence in their neighborhoods in a trauma-informed way.

A Pandemic Response Equal to Community Need

CCSI has had an outsized impact in the community because of its deep roots within schools and social organizations in the area. When the pandemic struck, Pacific Oaks College staff, including those at the center, were able to rely on its longstanding relationship with PUSD to distribute meals to the food insecure. In addition to having lunches available at the schools for children who were now learning remotely, they also mapped the district in order to make deliveries to families in need who were unable to travel.

Accustomed to the diversity of the Pacific Oaks community, those helping were quick to notice that too often school board meetings and updates were presented in English only. Staff from CCSI led the push to include translators, in some cases, refusing to allow meetings to begin until translators were present.

“An anti-racist person is on a lifelong journey that includes forming a new understanding of, and ways to live, her or his racial identity and then increasing commitment to an engagement in anti-racist actions.”

—Louise Derman-Sparks,
Pacific Oaks College
Faculty Emeritus,
author of “Anti-Bias
Curriculum: Tools
for Empowering
Young Children”

Instilling a Culture of Belonging

Pacific Oaks' culture of belonging has been a part of the institution since its founding. Guided by four core values—respect, diversity, social justice, and inclusion—Pacific Oaks strives to create an environment that welcomes, values, and is further enriched by different perspectives.

Hispanic-Serving Institution Grant Creates Opportunity

In the fall of 2020, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Pacific Oaks a five-year, \$2.5 million Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Title V competitive grant. Pacific Oaks was one of 40 universities nationwide to receive the grant.

The HSI grant funds multiple support services for Pacific Oaks undergraduate students.

Student Success Center

The Student Success Center provides an environment for students to feel at home, network with others, experience a sense of inclusion, and find inspiration in the stories of others in preparation to becoming professionals who are making significant contributions to facilitate changing inequitable systems and creating new cycles in their place.

Bilingual staff

Providing a space for students to feel truly heard and understood can be a vital aspect of their overall success in college and beyond.

Spanish-speaking students are greeted in their native language, establishing a sense of community and understanding.

Lending library

The lending library at the Student Success Center helps close gaps in student classroom performance, ensuring that all Pacific Oaks students receive equitable access to the materials they need to be successful learners.

Speaker series

The Student Success Center speaker series features Latinx entrepreneurs who discuss their personal stories and life struggles, many of which feature higher education as an anchoring force. Speakers have included:

Sasha Renée Pérez, mayor of Alhambra and the youngest Latina mayor to lead a city of more than 50,000 in California

Dr. César A. Cruz, Mexican immigrant, Harvard graduate, educator, activist, and author

Sarahi Salamanca, Dreamer, upcoming 30 Under 30, developer of an app that provides scholarship information to other Dreamers

Faculty development programs

Additionally, the HSI grant has provided new professional development programs for Pacific Oaks faculty members. Keeping faculty well-informed about the needs of diverse student populations can help them better help their students learn.

Pacific Oaks TV: Airing Issues, Advocating Change

Pacific Oaks TV (POTV) was created as a response to COVID-19 to keep the community connected in the face of uncertainty. The videos from within the College's community served as virtual conversation points and supportive resources for those who needed them. POTV introduced guests from across the community to provide their expertise and advice to students, staff, faculty, alumni, and the community at large.

Throughout its first few months, POTV focused on various topics relevant at the onset of COVID-19, including:

- Mental health effects of lockdowns
- Work-life balance while working from home
- Self-care
- Stress management
- Managing anxiety and wellness
- Returning to higher education during the time of pandemic

Later, "The Road to PO" series spotlighted various figures in the College's leadership, and discussions in later episodes centered on national events and social issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

*New Student Success Center (right),
funded by the Hispanic-Serving Institution Grant*

“At Pacific Oaks, our four pillars outline our values, but there is also a deep understanding among leadership and faculty that all four words have a great deal of overlap and all need to be incorporated together to achieve a true culture of belonging. We intertwine respect, diversity, social justice, and inclusion within our institution in a way that elevates them from being more than just a mission statement—they are lived realities that we actively strive to achieve with everything we do.”

—Michael Lopez-Patton,
Dean of Students, Pacific Oaks College



Understanding Our First Responsibility

Pacific Oaks Children's School, a pioneer in early childhood education since its establishment in 1945, saw its unique teaching methods put to the test in the spring of 2020. How the administration, faculty, parents, and students responded reflected the principles at the core of its educational philosophy.

Protecting the Preschoolers

Pacific Oaks Children's School was not immune to the lockdowns implemented in 2020, interrupting children's education everywhere and forcing the school to temporarily shut down. Recognizing the need to support those who dedicate themselves to educating our smallest citizens, Pacific Oaks continued to pay its teachers for several months while the school was closed.

When the goal of reopening in fall 2020 became clear, Pacific Oaks President Jack Paduntin was the biggest cheerleader for students' return. More than perhaps any president in the history of the College, Dr. Paduntin has assumed a prominent and personal role in support of the operation and objectives of the Children's School, and nowhere was that commitment more on display than during the pandemic.

"He completely grasps our mission," says Judy Krause, Ed.D., executive director of Pacific Oaks Children's School. "When we reopened to welcome a portion of our children back safely, he was down here every day."

Recognizing the need to find safe solutions to continue supporting the educational needs of students and their families, Pacific Oaks formed a committee of administration, teachers, parents, and community leaders to brainstorm strategies for a safe reopening of the Children's School. The committee constructed a thorough plan informed by local and federal guidelines, outfitting classrooms to minimize health risks.

With the new plan in place, the school was able to safely reopen for the 2020-21 school year in September 2020, welcoming back 70 students and 17 full-time teachers.



A Community Response to a Community in Crisis

With guidelines coming from so many departments of health at local and federal levels and changing so frequently, it was a difficult balancing act to determine which guidelines to implement and how to keep up with the changes both for the Children's School itself and for the surrounding district with which the Pacific Oaks community is so closely connected. Fortunately, an organization that predated the pandemic, the Child Care Director's Alliance, met monthly to discuss issues of common concern.

During the height of the pandemic, the group of 60 or so directors from across the Los Angeles area began meeting every week, and the meetings became an invaluable way for the various school administrators to stay on top of the rapidly changing guidance and regulations from the federal, state, and local levels.

This ad hoc network allowed Pacific Oaks Children's School leadership to have a constant support system and sounding board to help them make these decisions and ensure that all students were as safe as possible. The group provided a textbook example of how preexisting networks can be repurposed, expanded, and relied upon in times of crisis or need.

Pacific Oaks graduates who spent their practicum time at the Children's School leave with their knowledge from the college underscored by their experience here, ready to bring the feeling of welcoming community embrace and collaboration to their next classroom."

—Victor Soto,
Pacific Oaks College Alumnus
and Associate Director,
Pacific Oaks Children's School

Innovating Education for a Changing World

The academic programs at Pacific Oaks College are designed to do more than educate—they prepare students to be culturally intelligent agents of change who serve diverse communities in human development, education, and related academic fields. Out of foresight and necessity, the College is constantly evolving its programs to suit the interests of its students and the needs of the larger community.

New Academic Programs Anticipate Emerging Needs

Pacific Oaks College strives to create and innovate programming to mediate social detriments of health and wellness for marginalized groups and under-resourced communities.

In 2020, the College launched four new programs and specializations, continuing its longstanding commitment to expanding and updating its curriculum to reflect the evolving interests of its students and the needs of the communities they will ultimately serve.

B.S. in Business Administration

Interdisciplinary Studies, Spring 2020

The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration combines practical business knowledge in concert with fieldwork and a built-in study abroad component. Graduates of this program will be prepared for careers in management, global commerce, or nongovernmental organizations. An equally vital aspect of the program is its emphasis on corporate social responsibility, which calls upon graduates to conduct business with social and environmental concerns in mind.

Marriage and Family Therapy: LGBTQIA+ Studies Specialization

School of Culture & Family Psychology, Fall 2020

Graduates earning their M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy with a specialization in LGBTQIA+ Studies are better suited to provide affirmative therapy to all communities, which actively promotes self-acceptance of identity as a key part of well-being.

Online Bachelor of Social Work program

School of Culture & Family Psychology, Fall 2020

As a reflection of the College's core commitment to social justice, an online Bachelor of Social Work provides foundational knowledge and hands-on training relevant for entry-level positions within the field of social work.



Online Master of Social Work program

**School of Culture & Family
Psychology, Fall 2020**

The online Master of Social Work builds upon foundations with supervised fieldwork experience and prepares graduates to become licensed clinical social workers in the state of California.



“Our new academic programs are designed to prepare culturally competent, caring, and problem-solving graduates who are ready to meet the needs of our communities today and anticipate the needs of our communities tomorrow.”

—Bree Cook, Psy.D.,
Vice President of Academic
Affairs, Pacific Oaks College

Scholarship Creating Change

Whether serving on boards, providing workshops, volunteering, engaging in professional development, improving academic programs and courses, or engaging in research, the work faculty at Pacific Oaks does to prepare agents of change never stops. Even during a pandemic when travel for conferences halted, faculty continued to find ways to advance the core values of Pacific Oaks while providing real-world solutions for the communities they serve.

Making the Case for Change: Journal Articles, Presentation Topics, and Grants

Pacific Oaks faculty specialize and conduct research in a number of areas throughout their respective fields. The following are just a few of the article and presentation topics they undertook in 2020.

Education

- Rethinking Online Discussions
- Authentic Assessment in the Outdoor Classroom
- Integrating STEAM into the Early Childhood Education Setting
- Education in Peru: A Global Perspective
- Connecting Play and Learning in an Online World
- An Equation for Effective Online Discussions
- Technology, Learning, and the Brain
- Educational Leadership: Strategies to Strengthen Learning Communities in Digital Environments
- The Well-Prepared Adjunct

Psychology, Human Development, and Social Work

- Understanding Trauma and Abuse
- Unpacking Grief in the 21st Century
- Trauma and Resiliency in the Black Community
- Designing Spaces for Health and Well-Being for Those Experiencing Social Isolation
- LGBTQIA+: Basic Terminology
- Ambiguous Loss, Resilience, and Depression

Faculty Difference-Maker: Veronica Estrada



Veronica Estrada, Ed.D., faculty in the School of Human Development, was awarded the Dr. Yasmin Davidds Courage in Leadership Award from the University of Southern California Executive Leadership Program for Multicultural Women, from which she earned a certificate in October 2020. She

is also an Ambassador for the USC Executive Leadership Program. Dr. Estrada was one of four Faculty Development Awardees for her Executive Leadership Program for Multicultural Women project and was awarded \$2,000 for her research.

Faculty Difference-Maker: Marsha Swindler



In collaboration with two other instructors, Marsha Swindler, Ph.D., faculty in the School of Education, built the Course Buddy connection for which she was awarded a faculty grant. Students in three courses worked collaboratively with an assigned Course Buddy, coming together online using Zoom,

mirroring the expectations of the school environment. The demonstration showed how synchronous student engagement with solutions rooted in active learning and formative assessment can connect learners of every age and ability.

Faculty Difference-Maker: Yolanda Carlos



Professor Yolanda Carlos, faculty in the School of Education, completed a research paper and audio presentation series on the assessment and equity of early childhood educators. Deepa Fernandes, Pacific Oaks early childhood journalism fellow, discussed

some of Carlos' research in a segment that aired on NPR.

Researchers contacted the pair to learn more about preschool segregation and how to remedy it with plans to present this information to California Governor Gavin Newsom.

Faculty and Infrastructure Investments

Pacific Oaks College has made recent significant investments in its adjunct and core faculty.

- For core faculty, the College began offering multiyear contracts for the first time. The objective is to give faculty the freedom to pursue longer-term research projects and scholarship, knowing they will be with the College long term.
- The College's faculty assessment committee worked with TCS Education System to bolster its assessment process, exploring ways to better measure student learning in general education and core courses.

Putting Learning into Practice

Pacific Oaks College incorporates real-world training into many of its academic fieldwork and research requirements. Students gain an understanding of the systems they are working within, preparing them to jump into work that changes those systems for the better.

Programming for Impact: Community Psychology in Action

The B.A. in Community Psychology degree program at Pacific Oaks College prepares graduates to enhance community wellness through a combination of research, analysis, and action at a time when the essential need for such programs is all too apparent. The following are just three examples of the work community psychology students have conducted in their communities.

Cody Goddard

Cody Goddard worked at a school in the Bay Area of northern California. His first project involved creating plans for providing resources like technology and meals to families during the pandemic. Midway through his project, the school district he was working with reopened, and the information he had gathered was provided to neighboring school districts that were still closed.

His education at Pacific Oaks prepared him to make a shift in plans as the school reopened. He began working with the school counselor to provide increased mental health resources to students due to the stress of the pandemic. He created a space for students to exit the classroom and unwind or talk to someone about stressors they were experiencing. He found that permitting this 20- to 30-minute break for students as needed enabled them to return to class with improved focus.

Karla Guzman

Karla Guzman chose to work with a women's safehouse and wellness program, assisting in creating workshops based on the importance of self-care during recovery from addiction. After extensive research with the assistance of Pacific Oaks' faculty into other existing wellness programs in the area, she created her own based on the needs of the safehouse.

Her workshops helped teach women how to incorporate health strategies into their daily lives via nutritional choices and mental health exercises. She found that introducing these concepts to the women at the safehouse had a profound positive impact for most of them, providing tools many of them had never had access to before.

Michelle Bailey

Michelle Bailey chose diversity initiatives as her area of focus for her final project, interning with a nearby school district to recruit more African American staff at the school. Although the sector of the district she was working in had a high number of African American students, far fewer African American teachers and faculty members were in places of authority to support them.

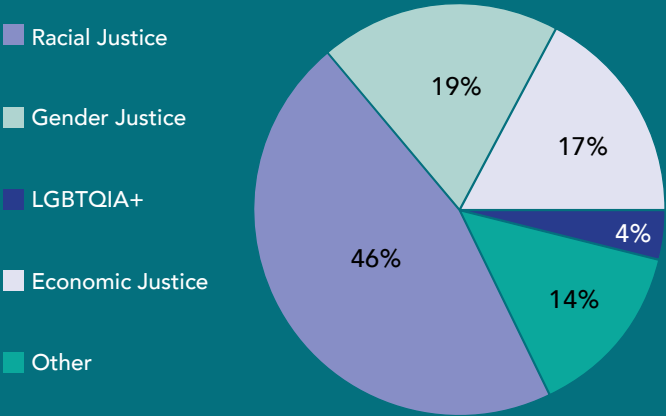
To better understand the issue, she first examined why the decline in African American representation in positions of leadership within the district had become an issue in the first place. After she had determined the root cause of the issue, Michelle began assisting the school in the development of new recruitment strategies.

“What I love about the B.A. in Community Psychology program at Pacific Oaks is that students are able to learn about community psychology as a field but also look at the different layers that affect communities or individuals, not just individuals in a moment.”

—Sheree Bielecki, M.Ed., Ed.D. Candidate,
Lead Faculty and Fieldwork Coordinator, for the
B.A. in Community Psychology Program

Numbers That Count

In the M.A. in Human Development program, thesis topics range across a wide array of social justice-related issues that drive impact.



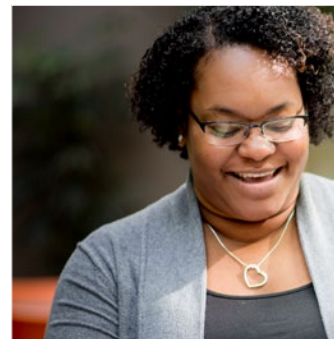
2020 master’s thesis titles

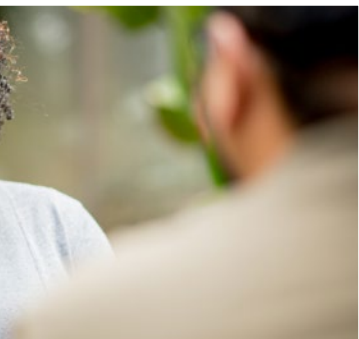
- The Effect of Urban Community Stressors on African American Head Start Preschoolers
- Latina Immigrant Access & Healthcare Utilization in LA County
- Armenian Sister Academy & Anti-Bias Curriculum
- Children Translating for Immigrant Parents



“Needs may change, but our commitment to our core values and the resulting impact of our work will never waver. As we continue to nurture change agents through our degree programs and outreach, I'm grateful and humbled to see the positive effects our faculty, students, and alumni have on the people, organizations, and communities we serve.”

—Jack Paduntin
President, Pacific Oaks College & Children's School





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