Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to announce that eight projects were selected to receive grant funding from the Provost Initiative on Understanding and Engaging with Extremism. The projects represent diverse topics and innovative approaches to extend knowledge about some of society's most challenging debates related to informed science, social justice, and critical inquiry through general education.

The response to the provost call for proposals underscores the unique community of UCI as public research university to understand extremism in society. Faculty responded to three priority areas: science denialism, denial of our common humanity, and promoting critical thinking in general educational courses. The call yielded nearly 20 faculty proposals - originating in seven academic schools - seeking funding in excess of $300,000.

The awards are part of a broader Confronting Extremism initiative launched this past October at UCI. The initiative seeks to forge dialogues to support social justice efforts in the face of extremist narratives, support inquiry and evidence-based practices to support inclusive communities aligned to campus values.

On behalf of the Provost, I would like to congratulate the following lead scholars and their project teams.

**Funded Projects Examining Science Denial**

**Interrogating the Character and Persistence of Science Denialism: The Case of the Anti-Vaccination Movement** - Contact Lead: David Snow, Department of Sociology. A study examining vaccine skepticism as manifested in the anti-vaccine movement in Southern California.

**Relativism and Skepticism: Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** - Lead: Duncan Pritchard, Department of Philosophy. Developing a MOOC to examine core epistemological issues about the extent to which truth is objective as opposed to being relative to certain factors such as social structure.

**Understanding and Confronting Science Denial: STEM Cell Research** - Lead: Aileen Anderson, Department of Physical Medicine. Developing programs to educate the academic community about the nature of controversies in stem cell research and evidence-based science, and to develop student and faculty skills in communicating about stem cell research in the face of denialism.

**Funded Projects Examining Denial of Common Humanity**

**Digital Extremism: Understanding and Confronting the Alt-right's Digital Toolkit** - Lead: Bill Maurer, Department of Anthropology. Public dialogues, workshops and seminars for
students and faculty examining how digital media is manipulated and spread, and discussing
digital tools used by the alt right, and ways to reimagine digital civics.

**Civic Education in Polarized Times** - Lead: Sara Goodman, Department of Political Science. Conducts original experiments to assess the effects of debate skills training, media literacy, and empathy building on novel measures of attitudes towards ideologically-different citizens and ethnic minorities.

**Bridging the Gap between Medical Education and Nursing Education, and the LGBT+ Community** - Lead: Ellena Peterson, Department of Pathology. Presents and assesses interactive trainings for medical and nursing students to enhance cultural competency in health care in addressing an under-served community in Orange County.

**Challenging the Liberal Order: Populist Politics from the Nazis to Today** - Lead: David Tse-Chien Pan, Department of European Languages and Studies. Workshop and focused examination of left- and right-wing movements in Germany and in the United States, providing an interdisciplinary discussion and analysis of extremism.

**Funded Project Augmenting Critical Thinking in General Education**

**The Virtuous Table** - Lead: Julia Lupton, Department of English. Connects the successful Conversation Kitchen format to the general education course "What to Eat," exploring global virtues and traditions through experiential learning and inclusive excellence.

For more information on these projects, please visit [inclusion.uci.edu](http://inclusion.uci.edu).

Expect Equity, Support Diversity and Practice Inclusion,

**Douglas M. Haynes**  
Vice Provost for Academic Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Inclusive Excellence  
Director, ADVANCE Program  
Professor of History  
Director, Medical Humanities Inter-School Excellence Initiative