Kate Inman is a third-year undergraduate studying Political Economy and Society & the Environment at UC Berkeley. Growing up in a pocket of the East Bay, she began serving her community early on as a Youth Commissioner for the City of the Pleasanton and the student board member of the Pleasanton Unified School District. After finding joy in civic engagement and competing on a nationally ranked competition civics team, Kate continued her studies and advocacy at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. While at Cal Poly, Kate led community organizing efforts for SLO Democrats during the 2020 primary and midterm elections, writing opinion pieces for Mustang News, and serving as the Heard Student Director for the VP of Student Affairs as an advocate for underrepresented student needs. After transferring to UC Berkeley, she flourished in a congressional internship with Rep. Salud Carbajal’s office and championed gender equity as a peer coordinator for PATH to Care, working on sexual prevention programming across campus. She is currently aiding the community as a caseworker for the ASUC Student Legal Clinic through volunteer tax filing for low-income, disabled, and senior Berkeley residents.

Day 1: Monday 3/21/2022

Over coffee and fresh fruit, Democracy Camp kicked off with the cohort gathering outside for breakfast conversation and a discussion with IGS Director Lisa García Bedolla. As the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Dean of the Graduate Division, and professor in the Graduate School of Education, Lisa’s trailblazing efforts in her leadership positions inspired a robust conversation discussing her experience as a woman of color in academia. She spoke about how both growing up in a family of Cuban immigrants and her identity has informed her educational journey at UC Berkeley and Yale. In an open dialogue, fellows shared their own individual experiences and questions, gaining an insightful look at how Lisa balances work and a personal life in addition to breaking barriers in education. This enriching conversation prompted self-reflection upon our own identities that have led us to UC Berkeley, and our individual drive for public service. With this in mind, I felt primed to soak up the differing perspectives and backgrounds across the rest of our speakers for the day.

Following the breakfast, we participated in a question and answer panel on research and public policy with G. Cristina Mora, Evan White, and Rohit Naimpally. In a lively conversation, we heard from each of the three panelists regarding their differing backgrounds and how they came to public policy research. From White, we learned about his trajectory from Berkeley Law to working in the Consumer Protection Bureau that led to his role at CA Policy Lab. He discussed
the challenges with working in government while showcasing the fulfillment in the heart of the policymaking process. His unique perspective helped shed light on the differences between inside government work versus outside, as both government positions and public research offer opportunities to advance the policy making process. Importantly, the panel also discussed how successful, valuable researchers deal with burnout when their hard work goes unutilized. By stepping back and acknowledging your group’s research is only one component of the decision making process, it helps you acknowledge that other influencing factors are actually more democratic.

As the conversation evolved, White and Naimpally emphasized the increasingly necessary data science research skills required to contribute to policy research. Naimpally commented on how students should approach skill building in quantitative research techniques like coding, while reassuring us that learning on the job with an open mind is equally as important. Throughout the conversation, we learned more about each individual’s work and research projects more in depth as each has harnessed large data set analysis. In Professor Mora’s transformational work, she has utilized programming to understand qualitative data by coding for key variables in hundreds of pages of interview notes. From an academic perspective, she discussed the importance of ethnography in research to show the value in conversing beyond an interview when gathering data. Out of the conversation, research is a much more approachable field knowing the varying avenues as it can relate to public policy. As most of the cohort has expressed an interest in research, hearing the day to day life of a public researcher was eye opening to both the great opportunities for achievement in and influence on public policy.

After, we headed outside for a picnic with sandwiches and good conversation amongst our cohort. Socializing on the lawn, we partook in a fun game and held a speaker brainstorm before heading back in to speak with Justice Goodwin Liu. Inside, we met with Justice Liu over Zoom where he discussed his own background as a California native and trajectory to the bench. He described his path to the bench as only linear in retrospect, but anything but linear in the moment as he moved from one job to another transitively. While originally planning on a career in medicine, he pursued other interests in education and diversity that ultimately led him to law school. I think this experience resonated with a lot of us as we have ideas of what we would like to do, but unsure on our direction definitively. Ultimately, Justice Liu attributed his path to having excellent mentors that encouraged him to seek new opportunities better aligned with his passions. His energy to a different path was his own reckoning with what was familiar in order to embrace the unknown. Such advice was really valuable as students in a high-pressure environment while many of us grapple with our future career paths and the decisions we make today.

Between law school and settling at UC Berkeley, five years went by where he clerked for Justice Ginsburg and a law firm. As a professor, Justice Liu taught for eight years where he enjoyed
students and the academic environment. However, people suggested he become a judge. Through a series of transitions, mainly mental, the natural transgression pushed him through his career to explore new bounds. While we have our own individual blinders affixed to our circumstances and goals, Justice Liu encouraged us to challenge ourselves to adjust to new experiences and opportunities can often be the most valuable. Furthermore, he emphasized finding ways to pursue his own interests in totality. He noted that he always had some research, teaching, and some impact/advocacy work going on at once. As someone who loves to be busy and entertain passions for both academics and the arts, I am hopeful knowing more about the value in a more well-rounded career.

Democracy Camp day one wrapped up with a networking workshop led by Claudia Gey. As the Program Manager for Institute of International Studies (IIS), Gey shared a useful guide to overcoming internal and external barriers to networking and the nuts and bolts of being successful in connecting with people. We discussed initial attitudes toward networking that exposed our shared hesitations that also shape internal barriers to initiating networking. Despite these reservations, we all agreed that networking is worthwhile because of the benefits of support and guidance, insight on a field, and exposure to new opportunities. Additionally, we highlighted that mentorships are mutually beneficial. To be successful at networking, Claudia noted the importance of finding mentors, connecting with others, being kind to yourself, having cultural awareness, and finding the right approach that works for you. With her advice in mind, we finished the day peer reviewing each other’s LinkedIn profiles to share knowledge and round out our profiles as we open ourselves up to networking.

While initially approaching the day without many expectations, I can confidently say each of us emerged more knowledgeable about opportunities for public service in research and how to position ourselves for success in future careers. We not only fostered relationships with our guest speakers, but each other as well. As we have transitioned back into in-person learning, socialization events like Democracy Camp are even more impactful as like-minded individuals are connected and collaborating in this learning environment.

**Day 2: Tuesday 3/22/2022**

The second day of Democracy Camp began on an exciting note with our speakers ready to kick off the agenda and discuss community work. The community panel began with both Elisa Della-Piana, the Deputy Director/Legal Director for LCCR SF, and Daryel Dunston, the Senior Director of the Place Pathway within the San Francisco Foundation, discussing their respective career paths. Della-Piana discussed her experience on the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights as driven by the goal of achieving racial, economic, and immigrant justice. Since 2004, Della-Piana has worked on strategy for contemporary legal issues for policy change with momentum in order to change the immediate circumstances and ignite long-term change.
In Della-Piana’s role as Deputy Director, she helps manage attorneys on the ground to ensure change, as they put pressure through impact litigation and policy work in legislatures in addition to direct services and community-based work. Dunston’s similar drive for public service and advocacy led him to work with local government that included his role as Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice Mayor of Oakland and work within the City Administrator’s Office targeting homelessness. Now, Dunston works for the San Francisco Foundation and is committed to ensuring Black and brown communities in the Bay Area are thriving and have resources. The foundation includes the community from the beginning to reach more poignant solutions, while partnering with government and community to fill service gaps and address equity issues. Dunston highlighted the value in working for a foundation because you can tap into the philanthropic community when the government cannot fix community issues alone.

Eager to learn more about the impactful careers of our panelists, fellows engaged with questions about the day-to-day roles and achievements. Within Dunston’s role, he oversees the Place Pathway division that works on affordable housing development, tenant protections, affordable housing preservation, community wealth building, and economic mobility. Something of particular interest to students was the Foundation’s advocacy when Build Back Better was going through Congress. Dunston shared how they convened advocacy organizations and reached out to elected officials, while also publishing op-eds in major papers to raise awareness. While just one example, we understood how the Foundation’s work touches federal, state, and local level in policy making and grant making.

As the conversation evolved, the question and answer based dialogue was oriented around a comparison between graduate programs at Berkeley and how both panelists expand access to engagement. Della-Piana explained some of the solutions to bettering engagement including, establishing trust, removing legal barriers, and proactive community building from bottom up. With both panelists bringing their valuable insights on Berkeley Law and the Goldman School of Public Policy, we were able to ask questions on both the values and differences between graduate programs to help us navigate what is best for us as fellows individually.

In the afternoon, we welcomed our council member, Rigel Robinson, to the table for an exciting conversation about political activeness and public service as a young adult. After completing his undergraduate degree at UC Berkeley, Robinson was elected to the Berkeley City Council in 2017 as the youngest representative. Before arriving to local government, Robinson interacted on campus with public service as a Cal in Sacramento Fellow and an advocate for the community as the EVAP for the ASUC. Robinson came into the position as a fervent champion of student rights to break the glass ceiling in public office. For the first time, student voices and needs were adequately recognized and represented. As current students, this was really inspiring to hear how on campus experiences can translate into public service.
Throughout his time in office, Robinson has shaped up to be an impressive advocate sharing the concerns of students for the first time in a formalized role. Drawing upon his own student experience, Robinson has helped spark sweeping change in the transportation landscape and affordable housing in the South Side neighborhoods. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, we were curious about how his role has changed. Robinson noted there has been a shift in advocacy and local government and city council meetings occur remotely. In turn, more engagement has simultaneously been achieved that creates a more robust understanding of constituent needs which was really interesting to learn. While there have been barriers associated with access to participation over the course of the pandemic, the access points to the City Council is really encouraging to students like myself to be directly heard remotely.

Following lunch outside with the cohort, we came back for a refreshing conversation about surviving and thriving at Cal with Ed Garnes and Janelle Webster. Janelle is completing a graduate degree at Saint Mary's University and currently working at CAPS on campus. Similarly, Ed is a doctoral intern for CAPS. In the presentation, we learned how our thoughts and feelings create behaviors to impact our mental health. We discussed common thinking traps we have all experienced, including overgeneralization, polarized thinking, and mental filtering.

We discussed the cycle of socialization, how we are socialized in that it shapes our identity and positively reinforces our behavior. We took a closer look at our values and how they developed over time in addition to mitigating identity. Social Cognitive Career Theory explained how our identities impact our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Self efficacy deals with our perceived challenges in our path as they are influenced by our social cognition.

Imposter phenomenon is the belief among highly accomplished individuals they are intellectually fraudulent. It manifests in different classes specifically in STEM classes and salients especially with students of color typically underrepresented and marginalized. When we are in environments that think less of you, we experience imposter syndrome despite our success. After establishing an understanding of these unproductive thought patterns, we challenge ourselves to tame our inner critic. We had a vulnerable conversation about our own difficulties when comparison takes our joy. To combat these negative thoughts, Ed and Janelle equipped us with skills to speak up and build healthy habits.

Following the presentation from CAPS, Emeryville Mayor John Bauters came to discuss his role in local government. Mayor Bauters grew up in the midwest from a large family and was defined by his involvement in community service throughout his life. In turn, his life has been dedicated to helping others while overcoming barriers as a LGBTQ housing insecure youth. As an elected official, he embodies the services he advocates but does not define himself by his role. After attending law school, he worked in public interest throughout his entire legal career. After working on legal services for unhoused people, Bauters moved out west to work on legislative
advocacy and policy work. Bauters was on the housing committee for the city and then the planning commission to rewrite affordable housing provisions. After running for city council and serving, Bauters was appointed to be mayor of Emeryville. In this capacity, he ensures people feel safe in his community by rooting out what often gets overlooked by city government. In turn, Bauters has championed affordable housing policy, working towards car-lite streets, and advancing racial and gender equity.

I was most inspired to learn Mayor Bauters prioritizes youth and being accessible to his constituents. The biggest takeaway from his talk was how he has utilized his elected capacity to make spaces for people. One key analogy Mayor Bauters made was that in policy work, you hand out bandaids, but as an official you run a hospital to fix the whole issue. Overall, he continuously emphasized that when pursuing public service, you can’t be doing it for a career alone. Rather you must be an advocate for your community through constant engagement.

**Day 3: Wednesday, 2/23/2022**

Bright and early, our cohort traveled just a few hours to the state capital, Sacramento, for a day packed full of meetings with powerful and impactful public servants in various roles for the state. First on our agenda was meeting with Tom Negerte at the California State Library where we saw some of the oldest books publishing California’s laws for each legislative session since the mid-nineteenth century. Emerging from the books, Negerte guided us into a room in the historic building housing more of the library that was originally intended for the California State Supreme Court. Encased by rich oak and beautiful imagery of the California State Seal above, we gathered to learn more about Negerte’s role with the California Research Bureau and prior experience as a journalist for the New York Times and Sacramento Bee. Negrete as a Cal alum went on to pursue a master’s degree in Journalism from Columbia University, which opened the door to a job as an editor for the New York Times. Inspired by his family of immigrants and growing up in southern California, Negerte wanted to tell stories factually and communicate the truth to the masses. While starting as a reporter, his knack was truly editing and hiring later on for the Sac Bee. However, as print media began to fall when the internet emerged, Negerte changed career paths ultimately ending up as the Director of the State Library’s California Research Bureau.

Inspired by prior conversations with researchers, fellows engaged in a conversation about the uses of state research services and skills necessary to effectively communicate and conduct research. Negerte emphasized the need to evolve and utilize data science skills and harnessing journalism style of writing to clearly delineate conclusions to policymakers. Learning more about the importance of both journalism and state research, we came away with a greater appreciation for investigative journalism holding policy makers accountable and value of independent government research.
We made our way over to the Grange restaurant for lunch following our tour of the State Library to meet with State Senator Nancy Skinner, our very own representative. Senator Skinner is a social justice advocate and accomplished legislator, serving our district since 2016. However, her journey in public service began back in the 1980s while she was a student at UC Berkeley serving on the city council. During the lunch, we had an empowered conversation about her trailblazing career path as a woman in politics. Specifically, we learned more about her legislative initiatives with changing the unjust felony murder laws and climate change initiatives.

Senator Skinner led our group back into the Capitol after finishing up lunch where we then met with UC Regent and former Speaker of the California Assembly, John Perez. Perez was a formidable legislator and trailblazer himself as one of the only Latinx and LGBTQ persons in state politics, while also being a Berkeley graduate. In his career, Perez was vital to the implementation of policy addressingFrom the moment our meeting began, Perez instilled his value for efficiency as tied to punctuality that he formalized while in office as Speaker. By ensuring people are on time through legislature norms, the Assembly was by far much more efficient under Perez’s leadership. His strict alignment to his values also translated into the landmark legislation he authored, including California’s Middle Class Scholarship. Perez continues to serve as a UC Regent, championing a more equitable experience for students receiving an elite education within the UC system.

Next, we headed into a meeting with Ben Chida, the Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary in the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom. Chida is an accomplished senior policy advisor, overseeing Cradle to Career, and graduated from UC Berkeley and Harvard Law School. Following his undergraduate degree, he decided to pursue a law degree to initiate systemic change after working with Teach For America in New York for three years and witnessing first hand barriers to educational opportunities. Discussing his non-traditional path to college further, fellows engaged in a discussion about being first-generation and transfer students at UC Berkeley. We also gained insight on the work of a policy advisor, as Chida detailed his responsibilities overseeing a large budget as it relates to educational initiatives under the Governor’s office.

As the life of an elected representative often does, a committee meeting ran over so we did not get to speak with Senator Monique Limón. However, we were lucky enough to spend time with her Chief of Staff, Mariana Sabeniano. During our conversation with Sabeniano, we learned more about the life of a staffer in the Capitol and her responsibilities as Chief of Staff. As a Latina, she spoke about how her identity resonates with Senator Limon’s platform and legislative advocacy in both the Assembly and Senate. Furthermore, fellows asked questions about how work life balance is as a staffer as opposed to being a representative. Despite the unexpected turn of events, we made the most of the opportunity to learn about working in the Capitol from a different perspective.
Day 4: Thursday, 3/24/2022

On the final day of Democracy Camp, we began with a breakfast conversation with **Thomas MacBride, Partner at Goodin, MacBride, Squeri, & Day, LLC**. We learned that MacBride has been a successful litigator at Downey Brand LLP and specializes in proceedings before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). MacBride participated in a number of successful legislative initiatives to reform CPUC procedures, including the drafting and advocacy for SB 799 that greatly enlarged the scope of judicial review. His own case arrived before the California Supreme Court, representing the first CPUC case appealed in 20 years. MacBride described the experience during breakfast as ending unanimously in his client’s favor, marking a great experience arguing before justices in Sacramento. Outside of his legal career, MacBride has also served on the UC Berkeley Board of Directors of the Alumni Association and Chairman of the Association’s Legislative Relations Committee.

Throughout the question and answer session, fellows asked more questions to know more about the litigation process as it relates to public agency regulation. MacBride explained the evolving dynamics of regulation over new industries like Uber and Lyft specifically as they have changed throughout his career. While MacBride shared he went into law school with the expectation of working in a traditional litigation setting, he has had a robust career and taken on interesting pro bono clients. During law school, a professor told him it never works out like you see on TV, advice that he confirmed to our group. Overall, we had a great experience meeting with MacBride and gained further insight into the legal profession from an accomplished litigator.

Shortly after, we were fortunate enough to meet with **Saru Jayaraman**, an assistant adjunct professor of public policy from the Goldman School and President of One Fair Wage and Director of the Food Labor Research Center at University of California, Berkeley. Her organizations. Jayaraman is an accomplished advocate and labor organizer, graduate of both Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Yale Law School, and widely recognized change maker by the *New York Times, New York Magazine, and SF Chronicle*. While Jayaraman attended graduate schools in law and public policy, she realized that organizing was the path for structural change. One Fair Wage represents 270,000 restaurant workers in a collectivist organizing structure, uplifting the voices of the people most impacted by low-wage labor in the restaurant industry, to accomplish such change.

Jayaraman’s goal was never to start an organization, but to make structural change in America. Organizing, according to Jayaramn, is about solving the problems people are facing on a daily basis rather than making her mission about herself. Organizing is a specific strategy, philosophy, and career path harnessing collective power led by the people most impacted to expose a structural power imbalance. We learned that we first must recognize our own privilege to uplift those most impacted through direct action and confrontation with people in power to change
their lives. When discussing how to organize successfully, Jayarman shared that the greatest power is unity because the sheer number of people most impacted becomes the fundamental building block of social movements. As fellows asked more questions about current social movements and Jayaraman’s opinion, she shared that she sees workers rejecting the wage structure and walking away. Furthermore, she thinks that the pandemic has created a pivotal moment as employers are raising wages and ballot measures are emerging as there is potential to move away from low wage work. In an impassioned discussion Jayaraman encouraged organizations to spiral in order to seize the moment to change policy. Commenting on current economic conditions, workers are already having trouble affording basic needs and as inflation continues to rise, our consumption ability fails. While the media often clings to the idea of a labor shortage, Jayaraman argues it is a wage shortage as there are millions of wage workers that are excited to work and want to be in the industry, but they cannot because of the low wages.

After our inspiring conversation, we transitioned into career building workshops for the remainder of the day. First, we listened to Megan Collins resume workshop, where she gave us useful tips on writing and formatting a resume to land jobs in public service. After learning about creating an effective resume, we split off into groups to peer-edit each other’s resumes. Next, we welcomed Christine Trost, Mary Crabb, and Emily Adsit from across campus for a research workshop shedding light on additional research and learning opportunities on campus. Some of the opportunities included BIMI which is a partnership with faculty, researchers, and students that investigates human mobility, immigrants integration and migration's role in transforming society around the world. Furthermore, Community Innovation and the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program were also spotlighted as new opportunities to research. We also learned more about the UC DC program open to Juniors and Seniors interested in spending a semester in Washington, DC interning and completing coursework. Alternatively, the Cal in the Capitol program offers a summer experience where students find individual internships while living together in the Washington center.

Finally, Democracy Camp ended with a lively debrief about the week. Overall, the fellows and I gained a robust understanding of the different career paths under the umbrella of public service that will inform our own career paths as we continue to explore our interests. Not only did we meet amazing people, learning about the differences they each make in our community, but the compassionate, driven individuals within our cohort that truly made Democracy Camp a life changing experience. For me, I felt like I was able to build a community of diverse people, bonded by a shared interest in public service.