



July 24, 2023

David Harding, *Professor of Sociology (Chair)*  
Matilde Bombardini, *Associate Professor of Business*  
Sandrine Dudoit, *Associate Dean, Faculty and Research, College of CDSS (ex officio)*  
Marta Gonzalez, *Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning*  
Jennifer Johnson-Hanks, *Executive Dean, College of Letters and Science (ex officio)*  
Ayesha Mahmud, *Assistant Professor of Demography*  
Tejas N. Narechania, *Professor of Law*  
Rasmus Nielsen, *Professor of Integrative Biology*  
Dara O'Rourke, *Professor of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management*  
Alex Saum Pascual, *Associate Professor of Contemporary Spanish Literature and New Media*  
Damon Young, *Professor of Film and French*

**RE: Charge to the Academic Advisory Committee on Social and Ethical Implications of Computing and Data Science**

Dear Colleagues,

I write to request your service on a new committee to advise campus leadership on how Berkeley can best invest in research and teaching related to the social and ethical implications of computing and data science. Your expertise makes you well suited to this service.

Before describing in detail the charge for this committee, some background may be helpful. In reviewing the original proposal to form a College of Computing, Data Science, and Society (CDSS), campus and, especially, systemwide reviewers criticized what they saw as a failure of the proposal to articulate clearly what “and Society” meant or entailed. Consequently, as part of the process of obtaining Regental approval to form CDSS, it was agreed that this committee would be established; in many ways, establishing this committee was a condition for the Regents to approve the new college. Specifically, in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into by the campus, the future Dean of CDSS, and the Executive Dean of the College of Letters & Science, which was part of the campus’s final submission to the UC Office of the President concerning the formation of CDSS, it was agreed, *inter alia*, that

By the beginning of the 2023–24 academic year, the EVCP [Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost] will appoint an advisory council, comprising between five and eight members, whose responsibility is to advise the EVCP on how CDSS can fulfill its commitment to the study, understanding and teaching of the social and ethical implications of computing and data science. The advisory council will make recommendations to the EVCP concerning an integrated approach to faculty hiring, research, graduate curriculum, and undergraduate teaching programs that it believes CDSS should implement individually or jointly with faculty in other schools and colleges, as well as advise the EVCP on collaborations and synergies that it believes CDSS and other colleges and schools should pursue. The EVCP will, in turn,

work with the dean of CDSS and other leaders of that college, as well as with the appropriate Senate bodies, on the possible implementation of those recommendations.

The section of the MOU just quoted summarizes most of the committee's charge.

While the impetus for this committee is helping to ensure a there there with regard to the "and Society" aspect of CDSS, the committee is not limited to considering the social and ethical implications of computing and data science solely in the context of CDSS. If it envisions opportunities that serve Berkeley's research and teaching in those areas outside of CDSS, it is free, as well, to provide advice about those opportunities to the EVCP.

Berkeley is full of innovation, so it will come as no surprise that many faculty, either as groups or individuals, have also been reflecting on some of the issues with which your committee has been charged, as have leaders in CDSS and in other units; correspondingly, people have begun to propose new programs and entities in this space, broadly defined. From time to time, I, as Provost, may seek the committee's comments on such proposals.

As stated in the MOU, I, as Provost, will work with the Dean of CDSS, its other leaders, deans of other schools and colleges, as well as with the appropriate Senate bodies, on the possible implementation of your committee's recommendations.

The MOU states that this committee will exist at least through the spring of 2028. Please be assured that I am *not* asking any of you to serve for five years. I would, though, hope that all committee members will agree to serve for at least two years, with at least some serving longer so that we can stagger appointments to help ensure continuity.

For the first academic year, meetings will be scheduled and convened by my office and I will work with the chair on meeting agendas. Chris Yetter, Senior Advisor to the Provost, will be assisting me with this work. Please confirm your participation by sending an email to [evcp@berkeley.edu](mailto:evcp@berkeley.edu). I hope you are able to accept this invitation and I look forward to meeting with you on this new committee.

Sincerely,



Benjamin E. Hermalin  
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost