Underground Scholars Initiative (USI)

Advocating for the success of formerly incarcerated and system-impacted individuals at the University of California, Riverside (UCR)
WELCOME
You are future forward, looking ahead with hope and expectation.

We’ll show you how to share your story, thrive in your studies, and make a lasting impact on our world and in our community.

Get started today with USI at UCR!

USI: Opportunities for Success
USI is a student-led organization at UCR. We provide opportunities to all prospective and current students who have been formerly incarcerated and/or have been impacted by the criminal justice system.
One of the best decisions I made during my undergrad at UCR was to join USI. “Throughout my years in academia, I heard ‘You can do it!’ and ‘If you study hard you will make it!’ — but I received no support or resources.” This changed when I joined USI. They welcomed me with open arms, supported and uplifted me, and showed me ways to use my voice to amplify voices that are silenced.

SOFIA RIVAS
Class of ‘20
(Ethnic Studies)

Enrolled in UCR’s Graduate School of Education master’s program
A STRONG HISTORY
Our history is strong, and our future is bright — just like the students we serve!

- USI began at UC Berkeley as a grassroots effort for those who were incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and/or system-impacted by the Prison Industrial Complex.
- UCLA brought USI to its campus, followed by UC Irvine.
- USI became an official organization at UCR in August 2018, thanks to the efforts of students, alumni, administrators, and allies!

- UC Santa Barbara brought USI to its campus and created a prison-to-university pipeline.

A BRIGHT FUTURE
USI at UCR champions its scholars with mentoring, resources, and advocacy.

- A safe and welcoming space
- Academic advising and resources
- Employment resources
- Opportunities to attend state/national events, network with politicians, and promote state legislation that supports our community
- Partnerships with campus departments and organizations, including UCR’s Guardian Scholars (for former foster youth), R’Kids (for student-parents), R’Collegiate Recovery (for students in recovery), and the Veterans Resource Center

GAINING GROUND
Our events and activities empower USI scholars to make lasting impacts.

- LATTC Annual National Reentry Week Symposium on Mass Incarceration and the Challenges of Reentry

Join a supportive community and access resources to help you succeed!

My first quarter at UCR was difficult because my partner was incarcerated, but then I discovered USI. It provided a safe space for healing, shared a variety of ways to make a difference in communities, and showed me the possibilities of higher education — regardless of one’s background! Being a part of this incredible coalition has presented me with many networking opportunities to pursue a career in social justice and go on to law school.

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JOIN, SHARE, COLLABORATE

ORGANIZATIONS: Collaborate with us to share resources and advocacy.

ALLIES: Share your support via social media engagement, resources, and/or a financial donation.

STUDENTS: Become a USI scholar.

YOUR DONATION MATTERS: @USI_UCR

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This information is accurate and reliable at the time of publication but may change without notice. Please contact Undergraduate Admissions for the most up-to-date information. (11/20)