

Case study 1

Berkeley Student Cooperative

The Berkeley Student Cooperative (formerly known as the USCA) is a nonprofit housing cooperative that provides affordable housing to UC Berkeley and other Bay Area college students in California.

The co-operative has over 1250 student members living in twenty student housing cooperatives around the UC Berkeley campus. Each house is democratically run, and members contribute their labour to help keep the housing costs affordable.

Mission

The mission of the Berkeley Student Cooperative is to provide a quality, low-cost, cooperative housing community to university students, thereby providing an educational opportunity for students who might not otherwise be able to afford a university education.

Beginnings

During the dire times of the Great Depression students strained for resources were starting cooperatives throughout the country. In February 1933, Harry Kingman, former YMCA director, is known to have inspired 14 UC Berkeley students to start the first student housing cooperative in Berkeley.

The plan was a success, inspiring members to work all summer to raise capital to keep their co-op alive. In the Fall of '33 the students leased the original Barrington Hall housing 48 students (a new Barrington Hall housing 200 men opened in '35), and in the summer of '34 the students leased a second house which they named Sheridan Hall. The members of the two houses incorporated that year as the University of California Students' Cooperative Association (UCSCA). In its second year, the co-op also hired its first non-student general manager.

Source: <http://berkeleystudentcooperative.org/about-bsc>

