

**VPUE Departmental Grant for Undergraduate Research:  
2009-2010 Sociology Department Proposal**

**SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM GOALS:**

In 2008-2009, the Sociology Department used VPUE funds to hire 33 undergraduate researchers to work on 13 different research projects. The variety of majors represented (13) demonstrates the wide appeal that Sociology projects have to the broader undergraduate population and presents an excellent opportunity to introduce students of all backgrounds to social science research. Each student received hands-on experience while acquiring important research training and skills. The Sociology Department has been extremely pleased with our experience with departmental VPUE funding and we look forward to continuing to provide undergraduate research opportunities with great enthusiasm.

This proposal requests funding to support undergraduate participation on a variety of directed research projects. There are three primary goals that motivate us to apply for these research funds:

A. The acquisition of research skills – Training in research methods is a central curricular component of the Sociology major. Participation in a research project reinforces and extends the concepts taught in the classroom. Although the majority of our majors will not become research sociologists, many of them do pursue careers in which research skills are an asset.

B. Advising and mentoring – The faculty who direct research projects commit to act as informal advisers and mentors. In addition to training students in research methods, participating faculty provide informal advice regarding course selection, career options, and may work with students to develop an honors thesis. Last year, we experimented with hiring undergraduates to work on doctoral student projects. Overwhelmingly, undergraduates praised both the research experience and the valuable connections that they made with graduate student project leaders. All doctoral student projects are overseen by faculty advisors.

C. Senior Honors Thesis – A growing percentage of our majors undertake a senior honors thesis. We believe that this trend is a direct outcome of establishing a regular program of undergraduate research opportunities. In particular, we encourage our juniors to participate in research with the hope that this experience will act as a springboard to a thesis project.

**PLAN FOR FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT:**

Administrative responsibility for the proposed program will be jointly exercised by the following: (a) Karen Cook, Department Chair; (b) Michael Rosenfeld, Director, Undergraduate Studies Committee; and (c) Susan Weersing, Administrative Services Manager.

**2009-2010 RESEARCH PROJECTS:**

The following research projects will hire undergraduate research assistants:

1. Project Title: Social Adaptations of Lymphoma Patients through the Life course. (Faculty Leader: Karen Cook)

Description: Current standards of care for those with Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma have significantly improved these patients' survivorship rates, with about 50% achieving long-term

remissions. With the increasing number of survivors, a growing interest has focused in the frequency and severity of psychosocial sequelae. Previous research has primarily addressed physical and psychological effects; however, it is also important to understand the social adaptation of recipients after they have re-entered normal lives. Social dimensions of adaptation, namely the areas of work, family and social relationships are poorly understood in this specific patient population. Our goal is to use qualitative data from in-depth interviews to guide our understanding of what cancer means to patients and how patients perceive its effects on their careers and relationships.

Responsibilities: RAs will assist in scheduling and transcribing interviews, as well as other tasks. Cook will meet bi-weekly with the research team to discuss research design and methods, especially as they relate to mixed-methods studies.

2. Project Title: Transitions in Modes of Exchange. (Faculty Leader: Karen Cook)

Description: This project examines transitions in modes of exchange. These changes can be between friends, market-level or large-scale political and economic transformations. The project examines micro-level processes through experimental tests in which participants experience a shift in the mode of exchange. It examines how these transitions impact phenomena such as uncertainty, risk management, trust, decision-making, affect, cohesion, and solidarity.

Responsibilities: RAs will assist in recruiting and scheduling subjects, putting subjects through the experiment, coding and entering data into statistical software. Cook will meet bi-weekly with the research team to discuss research design and methods, especially as they relate to experimental studies.

3. Project Title: Can legal mandates and organizational policy reduce the caretaker penalty? (Faculty Leader: Shelley Correll)

Description: Recent research has documented significant workplace penalties for motherhood that persist even after controlling for factors such as human capital investments, job differences, and hours worked. Experimental research has also documented significant workplace penalties for workers who take family leave. Leave takers are evaluated more negatively than others in terms of perceived commitment and allocation of organizational benefits. This project will investigate whether legal protections for leave takers can change normative judgments about mothers and leave takers. Using experimental procedures, the project will compare evaluations of workers' files across three conditions: 1) situations in which the law prohibits the expected discrimination, 2) situations in which a company's voluntary policy prohibits the expected discrimination, and 3) situations in which no policy, legal or voluntary, is in place.

Responsibilities: RAs will run experimental sessions, assist with scheduling and data entry, and will be involved in the design of experimental materials and procedures. Correll will meet bi-weekly the research team to discuss research design and methods and solicit input from team members.

4. Project Title: Accounting for Status. (Faculty Leaders: Shelley Correll and Cecilia Ridgeway)

Description: This project seeks to understand how accountability in decision-making influences the preferences of decision-makers. When we have to explain our decisions to others, does this cause us to move away from our own personal preferences and towards those that we think will

be consistent with the preferences of others? We rely on two different laboratory experiments to answer these questions: 1) a consumer decision experiment involving chocolate preferences; and 2) a hiring experiment.

Responsibilities: RAs will run experimental sessions, assist with scheduling and data entry, and will be involved in the design of experimental materials and procedures. Correll and Ridgway will meet bi-weekly the research team to discuss research design and methods and solicit input from team members.

5. Project Title: College Sexual and Contraceptive Practices. (Faculty Leader: Paula England)

Description: England's online survey collects data at over 15 universities on undergraduates' experiences with romantic relationships, dates, and sexuality, whether in relationships or more casual. She is also running a qualitative interview study of contraception among female Community College students (from lower SES backgrounds) and, for SES-background contrast, female 4-year college students at Stanford. The in-depth interviews focus on how consistent women have been in contraception, and what factors have led to inconsistency contraception.

Responsibilities: Students will:

- Learn STATA, conduct statistical analyses, and graph key results.
- Read transcripts and code data.
- Assist with analyzing data looking for common themes, producing documents containing "key quotes" illustrating themes in the data.
- Conduct interviews of Stanford undergraduates.
- Complete CITI Human Subjects training.

6. Project Title: Immigration and US History High School Text books. (Faculty Leader: Tomas Jimenez)

Description: This project will examine how US history high school textbooks from 1930 - 2008 have discussed immigration as part of the American national narrative. The US is a self-described "nation of immigrants," but we have limited sociological understanding of how this self-description has developed over time. US history textbooks are concrete instantiations of the American national narrative and are a perfect source of data for understanding how the "nation of immigrants" came about.

Responsibilities: An RA will locate, scan, and code relevant portions of text from high school US history textbooks and will also be involved in the preliminary analysis of these texts. Jimenez will meet with the RA bi-weekly to discuss progress on the project, and to map out the broad trends in portrayal of immigrants and immigration in the texts.

7. Project Title: The Civic Effects of a District Transfer Program. (Faculty Leader: Doug McAdam)

Description – To settle a 1970s desegregation lawsuit, several majority white school districts agreed to accept 280 transfer students a year by lottery from the then overwhelmingly black Ravenswood School District. Although the program has been in place for a quarter of a century, no one has done a systematic assessment of the impact of the program on a range of educational and social outcomes. In this piece of a much larger project, we aim to assess the civic effects of the program. Using survey and interview data, we will compare the civic attitudes and behaviors of current middle and high school transfer students with those students who applied to take part in the program, but were not chosen. Our goal is simple: to find out if

the program positively impacts the civic attitudes, knowledge and behavior of the transfer students.

Responsibilities: RAs will assist with the design, pretest and administration of the survey to be distributed to the transfer and non-transfer students.

8. Project Title: Stanford Note Study. (Faculty Leader: Dan McFarland)

Description: This project analyzes interpersonal notes in order to get a better understanding of how youth negotiate their relationships and develop a sense of self.

Responsibilities: RAs will read and pull notes of various types (e.g., those using poems, those entailing breakups, etc), code various mentioned relationships, read and discuss faculty writings about the notes, and explore topics of their own choosing with faculty guidance.

9. Project Title: The Impact of Protest on Gay and Lesbian Business Organization. (Faculty Leader: Susan Olzak)

Description: This project explores the impact of social protest activity on gay and lesbian organizations in a sample of cities in the United States, 1989-2007. A wide variety of studies suggest that anti-gay and anti-lesbian attacks raise the salience of gay and lesbian business organizations, creating community solidarity. Alternatively, others have argued that the impact of hate crimes against these groups would have a mainly detrimental effect on the gay and lesbian community. The theoretical goal will be to evaluate each claim empirically.

Responsibilities: RAs will collect information on protest and attacks using online archives of local newspapers to code information on gay and lesbian rights' protest and anti-gay and lesbian attacks. RAs will meet weekly; one student will be designated as the "quality control leader" and will check others' work for errors and discrepancies. RAs will prepare quarterly memos summarizing their findings. Students will begin by coding high priority city newspapers for each of the 19 years. As we develop and refine our coding methods, we will add other cities. .

10. Project Title: The Changing Dynamics of Mate/Partner Selection. (Faculty Leader: Michael Rosenfeld)

Description: This project will examine how couples meet, in other words where and when in the life-course people first meet the individuals who will later become their partners and spouses. This used to be a central research question in American sociology 60 years ago, when most people met their future partners in the same way (by living in the same neighborhood). Now that young adults marry later and spend more of their single years away from the parental nest, it is time to figure out how patterns of young adulthood affect who meets (and who partners) with whom. The project will gather and analyze two sources of data: 1) narrative descriptions of how 3000 randomly selected Americans met their current partners, and 2) in-depth interviews.

Responsibilities: The RA will help Rosenfeld analyze the data from the narrative descriptions and will take part in and help transcribe the tapes from interviews.

11. Project Title: Sociology Doctoral Student Research Projects. (Project Leaders: TBA)

Description: Doctoral dissertation projects provide valuable opportunities for undergraduates to receive training in social science research. Examples of dissertation projects that would benefit from undergraduate RAs include:

☐ A. SHARKEY: In my dissertation, I argue that some categories of organizations are more highly esteemed than others. I propose that beliefs about category status in turn influence how the actions of category members are evaluated when they commit an act of deviance. I explore this by analyzing how the market reaction to an earnings restatement differs as a function of the status of the category to which an organization belongs. An RA would help me collect data from Fortune Magazine's America's Most Admired Companies survey and would learn more about the role of status in market settings.

☐ B. COOK: My dissertation project investigates the consequences of regime change and sweeping social structural changes on social movements in post-apartheid South Africa from 1994-2009. Some of the questions I will investigate are: What happens when movements "win"? What types of new social movements emerge after a democratic transition, and how do preexisting movements negotiate the transition? Who are the new targets of activism? How and why do new targets, ideologies and tactics emerge? RAs will be exposed to archival research and to online search software as well as both qualitative and quantitative data coding and analysis

☐ M. KU: My dissertation research examines when gender matters in career processes in medicine, law, and teaching. I use quantitative data to assess the degree to which women's and men's jobs differ over the course of careers, and qualitative data to understand the nuances in career decision-making among women and men in these professions. An RA would conduct interviews with doctors, lawyers, and teachers, and assist with organization and coding of data.

To be eligible for VPUE research support, doctoral students will need to receive advisor approval of their plan to incorporate RAs into the research project. The advisor will commit to oversee the research project and to meet as necessary with both the doctoral student and the undergraduate RAs.

**RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS:** Research opportunities will be advertised to undergraduates: 1) via email distribution lists; 2) posting on the Sociology website; 3) announcements and flier distribution in Sociology courses; and 4) at a research opportunities luncheon at which faculty will detail their research projects. Based on past experience, we feel confident that we will be able to accommodate virtually all students who are interested in taking part in this program.

**STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS AND DELIVERABLES:** The primary student product will be the skills that they master and the work that they complete. Each project will individually coordinate RA assignments and presentations of work to the research team.

**PROGRAM EVALUATIONS:** All participating students will be asked to complete a department survey when their work on the project ends and/or the funding period comes to a close. The survey that Sociology administers provides us with information about overall satisfaction and skill acquisition as well as the students' views about Sociology courses. We have found this to be quite helpful. In addition, students will be asked to complete the VPUE survey which is administered centrally.

Student feedback from 2008-2009 was extremely positive and 86% responded that the skills that they acquired enhanced their major experience or helped them with their own research.

“Working to develop, edit, and utilize codified systems of analysis [was valuable], because I can apply it to other work, research, and analyses.”

“Working with [Prof. Olzak] is amazing, and has provided such amazing learning and growing opportunities. Working with her has helped to define what my Stanford experience has been.”

**BUDGET REQUEST:**

2500 Academic Year hours for student research assistants -	\$35,000
2000 Summer hours for student research assistants -	\$28,000
Printing and related administrative costs -	\$ 400