



FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY  
Applications due January 9, 2017

*Application portal can be accessed starting November 15, 2016, at <https://www-casbs.stanford.edu/local/application/summer-institute>*

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR  
BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

*Organizations and Their Effectiveness*

**July 10 through July 21, 2017**

**Directors**

**Robert Gibbons** (rgibbons@mit.edu), economics and management, MIT  
**Woody Powell** (woodyp@stanford.edu), education and sociology, Stanford University

**ABOUT THE CASBS SUMMER INSTITUTE**

The 2017 CASBS summer institute, *Organizations and Their Effectiveness*, will take place from July 10 through July 21, 2017, at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences on the Stanford University campus. Fourteen fellowships will be awarded to cover tuition, room and board, and travel.

The deadline for applications is January 9, 2017. Awards will be announced by email no later than February 7, 2017.

## **TOPICS AND PURPOSE**

Organizations are all around us: not just firms, plants, and work groups, but also hospitals, schools, and governments. Furthermore, by construing an “organization” as something that can be first organized and then managed, one can also include certain contractual relationships—not only between firms (such as some hand-in-glove supply relationships, joint ventures, and alliances) but also between a government and a firm (such as some regulatory relationships and public-private partnerships). Indeed, noting that the examples above are all opportunities to collaborate, one can move beyond formal organization charts and formal contracts to include communities, networks, social movements and other less formal institutions as organizations.

Given such a broad domain, a huge fraction of economic activity, as well as much political and social activity, is undertaken in, with, or by organizations. Put differently, if organizations are how we collaborate, it is important to get them right! For example, the gains from improving production activities and supply chains in low-income countries could be enormous. Also, learning from the “bright spots” among hospitals, schools, and governments, and understanding how these successes might be spread, could be immensely valuable. Finally, although industrial productivity in high-income countries may seem mundane to some, improving the effectiveness of such firms might nonetheless allow substantial improvements in the quality of life—both for the workforces in these firms and for the communities that experience the products and externalities these firms produce.

If organizational effectiveness is so important for innovation and social impact, one might think that academics would be studying the issue actively. To some extent, this is true, but the field is badly fragmented: different disciplines operate mostly in isolation; many professional schools focus on only their own kind of organization (e.g., hospitals, schools, public agencies, businesses). Meanwhile, social-science departments often regard organizational effectiveness as outside their purview; and doctoral training in professional schools often lacks the depth available in social-science departments.

The summer institute will begin with presentations by senior faculty about the basic ingredients of their field’s approach to studying organizations— provisionally, a day each from economics, political science, and sociology. Beyond the senior faculty, the participants will be young scholars (ranging from late-stage graduate students to advanced assistant professors) whose careers studying organizations are underway, and who have demonstrated an interest in and an aptitude for expanding their thinking about organizations towards other disciplines. After these basic-ingredients days, the remainder of the two weeks will be devoted to (a) presentations by and discussion of work by the young scholars and (b) presentations from senior faculty on cutting-edge topics.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Those eligible to apply include advanced graduate students, junior faculty, and recently tenured scholars from the social and behavioral sciences and allied professional schools. We are also interested in applications from scholars affiliated with four-year colleges and with colleges and universities attended predominately by minority students.

Accepted applicants will be expected to come prepared by having read a syllabus of about approximately 30 key papers and surveys.

## **LOCATION**

The Center is located on a hillside overlooking the Stanford University campus. Excellent local library resources will be available to the participants. Comfortable studies in beautiful surroundings will be provided.

## **SUPPORT**

The institute is funded by MIT and Stanford University. Participation is free but restricted to admitted applicants. Rooms will be reserved at a nearby hotel. Travel and meal expenses will be covered, subject to standard constraints.

## **APPLICATION**

The application will include: (i) a cover letter providing contact information and the name of the recommendation writer; (ii) a curriculum vitae (for faculty, this should include not only research but also courses taught; for doctoral students, not only research but also courses taken); (iii) a two-page essay explaining how the institute will advance the applicant's research; and (iv) one letter of recommendation, which will be treated confidentially and submitted through our secure application system.

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## **THE DIRECTORS**

Gibbons and Powell both have one foot in their respective disciplines and the other in professional schools. Gibbons has appointments in the Sloan School of Management and the Economics Department at MIT, and he regularly teaches organizational economics to PhD students from economics and a variety of disciplines. Powell has an appointment in the Graduate School of Education at Stanford, as well as sociology, business, engineering, and public policy. He, too, teaches an organization theory seminar annually that attracts PhD students from more than a half dozen departments and schools. Additional guest senior faculty will be like-minded scholars from other social science disciplines.

## **COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE INAUGURAL SUMMER INSTITUTE (2016)**

Consuelo Amat, political science, Yale - - "I learned an immense amount and enjoyed every moment. My scholarly career now has a strong link to a community of scholars – organizational scholars – that I did not have before."

Christof Brandtner, sociology, Stanford - - "‘Nerd camp’ was the best academic experience I have had so far. Thank you!"

Manuel Grieder, economics, ETH Zurich - - "I enjoyed these two weeks immensely, it was a lot of work, but also a lot of fun, and I am excited about putting the new ideas developed during

these two weeks to work in my own research. My perspective on organizational research got both broader and deeper. I believe I will benefit for a long time to come from my participation in the workshop.”

Mike Powell, strategy, Kellogg School, Northwestern – “My view of interdisciplinary research has changed a lot as a result of this summer institute. In the past, interdisciplinarity seemed sold as an objective in itself, rather than as a means to achieve an understanding of complex social phenomena by going beyond my own discipline’s boundaries. This experience will make me much more likely to find common ground with other academics who are studying fundamentally similar questions but through different lenses.”

Aaron Shaw, communication studies, Northwestern – “I enjoyed and benefited from every aspect of the summer institute, including the challenging conversations, the generous mentorship of the leaders, the collaborative spirit of the participants, and the extraordinary support of the center staff. As junior faculty, the opportunities I have for sustained engagement with big ideas in a small group of extraordinary interlocutors are limited. I am deeply grateful to have been a part of this institute.”

Melissa Valentine, work, technology, and organization, Stanford School of Engineering – “I do interdisciplinary work, but with computer scientists. I think this institute has made me crave the discipline and creativity that can come from thinking hard across disciplines. I am also inspired to be a broader and deeper reader. The institute made me want to be a deeper and more reflective scholar.”