



FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY
Applications due January 12, 2018

Application portal can be accessed starting November 15, 2017, at <https://www-casbs.stanford.edu/local/application/summer-institute>

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR
BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

Organizations and Their Effectiveness

July 9 through July 21, 2018

Directors

Robert Gibbons (rgibbons@mit.edu), economics and management, MIT
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ABOUT THE CASBS SUMMER INSTITUTE

The 2018 CASBS summer institute, *Organizations and Their Effectiveness*, will take place from July 9 through July 21, 2018, 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 12, 2018. Awards will be announced by email no later than February 9, 2018.

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 sometimes lacks the depth available in social-science departments.

The summer institute begins with presentations by senior faculty about the basic ingredients of their respective field’s approach to studying organizations—about a day each on economics, ethnography, 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) group discussions and group projects (“hacks”) on thorny organizational ideas and problems, (b) presentations from senior faculty on cutting-edge topics, and (c) evening dinner conversations with scholars and practitioners who have been deeply involved in the worlds of politics, the law, journalism, and business.

ELIGIBILITY

Those eligible to apply include advanced graduate students and junior faculty 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

Admitted applicants will be offered a fellowship that will fully cover all expenses, including transportation (within the usual university-mandated constraints on travel expenses). Lodging will be provided and meals will be covered. Though not required, any financial contribution from participant's home institution would be greatly appreciated.

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 communication. He, too, teaches an organization theory seminar annually that attracts PhD students from more than a half dozen departments and schools. Both Gibbons and Powell have previously been CASBS fellows, and co-directed previous summer institutes at CASBS. Additional guest senior faculty will be like-minded scholars from other social science disciplines.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2016 and 2017 SUMMER INSTITUTES:

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.” (2016)

Angela Aristidou, organizational behavior, Warwick Business School — “We received encouragement to think beyond disciplinary boundaries. This understanding changes one's mind on what a scholarly career should aim at: big ideas and real world impact. The effect of the CASBS summer institute is like a "greenhouse effect": thinking that would otherwise take years to develop, is expedited through the purposeful interactions within the group, and the targeted and immediate feedback to budding ideas by Woody and Bob.” (2017)

Valentina Assenova, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania – “The institute — and meeting all of the amazing scholars with whom it has been a privilege to interact these last two weeks — has completely changed the way that I view my work and my purpose as a researcher. I have realized that the potential audience for work in organizations is much larger and more diverse than I imagined. This realization has given me inspiration to write more simply and use less jargon, to facilitate greater inter-disciplinary collaboration and make it easier for a broader audience to read my work. I have also realized that I can really benefit from sitting in on seminars in political science and economics at my university and interacting with a diverse set of scholars. Some of the biggest breakthroughs in organizational sociology have come from people with very open minds and eclectic interests outside of the canon of accepted work and methods.” (2017)

Claudine Gartenberg, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania – “This institute has definitely made a large impact. First and foremost, the quality of the research was so incredible that it was very inspiring. I have seen so much satisficing over the years to get numbers of publications up, or get into conferences or get citations – it is such a breath of fresh air to see such beautiful research that has intellectual value for itself, and that makes you understand the world differently after you read it and really think about it. I want to make sure my research can have similar impact over the long run.” (2017)

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.” (2016)

Hongyi Li, economics, University of New South Wales – “I found the mix of activities to be a fantastic combination. The summer institute allowed us to develop a clear sense of each disciplinary approach and its strengths. It then showed how an interdisciplinary approach – combining ideas and techniques from multiple perspectives in tackling difficult organizational problems – may add immense value, especially for applied problems where organizational leaders must put insights into practice. I plan to continue to engage with organizational research from other disciplines in my scholarship – both by “stealing” valuable conceptual insights and by being more open-minded about methodological choices in my own work.” (2017)

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.” (2016)

Chris Rea, sociology, UCLA – “The workshop was absolutely not a space for intellectual boxing matches, to see whose ideas could knock down the competition and better explain this or that about the way the world works. Instead, it was a space for rabid cross-disciplinary stealing, intellectual construction, and collaborative, collective inquiry using lenses from across the social sciences in service of understanding how organizations work, where they come from, and how we might make them work better. I can’t imagine a better way to spend two weeks.” (2017)

Ben Schneer, political science, Florida State University – “These two weeks reminded me that ultimately my career should be about exchanging ideas and trying to get people to think about things in a new way. It also reminded me that it can be a social / collaborative endeavor. Especially as someone just starting out (finishing grad school and beginning as an assistant professor), I think it is easy to focus myopically on cranking out work and to lose sight of what the larger goals are. This experience reminds me of those ideals.” (2017)

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.” (2016)

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. The institute made me want to be a deeper and more reflective scholar.” (2016)