Postdoctoral Fellowship – Personal Network Change Over Time

A two-year postdoctoral position in the Berkeley Population Center will be available beginning July 1, 2016 in the group headed by Professor Claude Fischer. The postdoctoral scholar will be responsible for conducting research on the composition and dynamics of ego-centered social networks using a new panel survey, UCNets (http://UCNets.berkeley.edu).

Project Background

The UC Berkeley Social Networks Study, or “UCNets” is a five-year panel study funded by the National Institute on Aging, R01 AG041955. People in two age groups (cohorts) – 21-30 year-olds and 50-70 year-olds — will be interviewed three times, allowing us to test how changes in social connections happen and affect health. The first wave is now complete. We draw participants from 6 Bay Area counties: San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara. In 2015, most people were interviewed in person, while the other participants filled out a self-administered web survey. In the second and third waves, some of the participants who were interviewed in person will do the survey online.

In this panel study of social ties, it will be possible to see how a person’s connections change as a result of life changes, such as marriage or divorce, moving, retiring, illness, and other events. Because people’s personal networks shape physical and emotional well-being, understanding how and why networks change will have important health implications, especially as Americans encounter changing families, new lifestyles, and economic challenges.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities expected of this position include: (1) Conduct research on the UCNets data set, with some interest but no obligation in collaborative efforts. (2) Receive grant-writing training in and support in order to develop a proposal for supplemental NIH funding; (3) Get training in responsible conduct of research (required by NIH); (4) Attend UCNets meetings, demography or other departmental colloquia and other related events; and if interested and qualified.

The project’s research aims focus on the association of network changes, health conditions, and life events. The survey also contains an experiment in mode effects (web versus face-to-face) and questions on a variety of topics. The postdoc will be expected to analyze the first wave of the data for the purpose of publication. Training and supervising of beginning graduate students may also be periodically required. Opportunities to extend the postdoc’s line of independent research may also be supported.

We seek candidates with a demonstrated commitment to studying significant issues in the topic areas and methods that are represented in the UCNets study, “Understanding how personal networks change.”
Basic Qualifications at the time of application: Enrollment in a Ph.D., or equivalent degree, program in sociology, demography or a closely related field.

Additional Qualifications by the appointment start date: PhD or equivalent within the five years preceding the appointment in sociology, demography or a closely related field. Demonstrable knowledge about ego-centered networks and their impact on health and well-being. Knowledge of at least one statistical analysis package or program is required (R, SAS, SPSS and/or Stata). The total duration of an individual's postdoctoral service may not exceed five years, including postdoctoral service at other institutions.

Preferred Qualifications: Ability to work both independently and in collaboration. Training in demography, and experience with ego-centered networks, multi-level and/or event history analysis, as well as other forms of multivariate analysis. Qualitative and mixed methods skills are also preferred.

Salary and Benefits: The initial appointment is for one year, with possibility of renewal. The salary range for this position is $47,224-$55,000. Starting salary is commensurate with experience and scope of appointment. The University of California offers a comprehensive benefits package for postdoctoral scholars. (http://www.garnett-powers.com/postdoc/index.htm).

Complete applications will include a cover letter, CV, a statement of research interests that you might pursue relating to the UCNets project, a writing sample, and the names and contact information for three references. References will only be sought for finalists. All letters will be treated as confidential per University of California policy and California state law.

This position is open until filled. Questions regarding this position can be directed to Dr. Leora Lawton, llawton@berkeley.edu. Applications can be submitted at http://aprecruit.berkeley.edu/apply/JPF00987.

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