July 15, 2011

MEMO: Student Funding Policy

To PSTC Trainees and Faculty:

The PSTC Associate Director has available a limited number of small grants (under $5,000) for graduate students who are PSTC trainees. These grants are intended to advance students’ population-related research projects in ways that will also increase the visibility of the student and therefore the Center in the Population Sciences. At the core of American population sciences are publications in top population journals (Demography, Population Studies, Population and Development Review, and several others that are more targeted in terms of social science discipline, methodology, or topic) and funding for empirical research from the Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch of NICHD. At the core of the PSTC’s training program is a strong foundation in and contribution to the theoretical literature in Anthropology, Economics or Sociology. Proposals for funding will therefore be judged on the basis of the potential for the funding to advance the student’s progress along a path toward top population publications (through high-quality, theoretically and empirically rigorous research on a population topic) and successful external funding. To leverage the limited funds that we have available for these projects, we will award small grants for targeted activities that will lead to publications, provide essential preliminary data for a future research proposal or publication, or similar endeavors. Examples of competitive proposals are pre-dissertation fieldwork that would allow the student to write a preliminary article or compete successfully for an external grant for dissertation fieldwork, or purchase of data that would allow the student to complete an analysis that will lead to a publishable article. We will not provide funding for large-scale dissertation fieldwork. In rare cases where a student needs to conduct limited fieldwork to complement other analysis for their dissertation, we will consider funding that fieldwork.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Associate Director, with consultation requested from Center faculty affiliates in cases in which the Associate Director is unable to judge the merit of the work. Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis, and students can expect to receive a decision within three weeks of receipt of all materials. Proposals should include:

1. A brief description of your research plan, addressing how it will further your population-related research (no more than 1,000 words)
2. Itemized budget request (include a note if the total cost of the project is larger than the request to PSTC)
3. Your current source of stipend and tuition funding
4. A list of other sources of funding you have requested for this project, including the current status of those requests (approved, denied, pending)
5. A letter of endorsement from your primary advisor

Items 1-4 should be submitted in a single document to the Assistant Director, Shauna Mecartea, at shauna_mecartea@brown.edu. Item 5 should be submitted separately to Shauna Mecartea by the student’s advisor (a brief email is fine).

If you have any questions, then contact either the Associate Director (leah_vanwey@brown.edu) or Assistant Director.