



AERA Launches Initiative on Education and Adolescent Health

The American Educational Research Association, in collaboration with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), is pleased to launch the AERA Research Fellowship in Education and Adolescent Health. This fellowship provides an intensive training opportunity for advanced graduate students and junior scholars using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) and the Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement (AHAA) study. In a competitive review process that drew more than 150 applications, the fellowship was awarded to 14 junior scholars who are in predoctoral or postdoctoral training or have completed their doctoral degrees in the last 5 years. The Association received a grant from the Spencer Foundation to support this initiative.

This cohort of fellows will participate in an initial group meeting to discuss their research goals on July 23, to be followed by the Add Health Users Conference on July 24–25. The Users Conference is part of a larger AERA training experience that continues through the 2009 AERA Annual Meeting. This year the Conference includes an education track with one dedicated methodology session and two paper sessions that reflect use of these data sets in addition to the overall program of sessions. The Users Conference is being organized by Add Health at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and by the NICHD.

In addition to attending the Users Conference, all fellows have specified a project that uses the Add Health and AHAA data. They will be undertaking their projects during the coming year with the guidance of three mentors experienced in the use of these resources (Chandra Muller, University of Texas at Austin, principal investigator of AHAA; Ken Frank, Michigan State University; and Kathryn Schiller, University at Albany, SUNY). The culmination of this

effort will be a presentation of the work at the 2009 AERA Annual Meeting, followed by a post–Annual Meeting capstone retreat to help fellows further strengthen their research programs.

Each fellow will use data from Add Health and/or the AHAA study to address a broad range of research questions and policy issues. Add Health is a nationally representative study that explores the causes of health-related behaviors of adolescents in Grades 7–12 and their outcomes in young adulthood. It examines how elements of the social context—families, friends, peers, schools, neighborhoods, and communities— influence adolescents’ health and risk behaviors. Initially launched in 1994 under a grant from the NICHD, Add Health is the largest, most comprehensive survey of adolescents ever undertaken. Data at the individual, family, school, and community levels were collected in two waves between 1994 and 1996. In 2001 and 2002, Add Health respondents participated in follow-up interviews in a third wave to investigate the influence that adolescence has on young adulthood.

The AHAA study expands the Add Health data to include detailed information on students’ educational achievement, course-taking patterns, curricular exposure, and educational contexts within and between schools. The AHAA study links high school transcript data of Add Health respondents to provide further information about students’ high school experiences.

Among the research topics the fellows will investigate using these data sets are student course-taking patterns, sexuality and achievement, and the influence of social networks on academic outcomes. Table 1 provides a complete list of fellows and titles of their research projects. A goal of this fellowship is to increase the use of the Add Health and AHAA data sets among junior scholars who will produce the next wave of journal articles, policy reports, and other publications addressing how social contexts

influence risk behaviors and student achievement. Findings from this research can help policy makers, researchers, health-care providers, and educators understand and protect the health of adolescents and young adults.

“We are pleased to provide support for such promising studies that will contribute to the knowledge base and the science of education research,” said Felice J. Levine, AERA Executive Director. “The Add Health and AHAA data sets provide a wealth of information linking adolescent development and health and education outcomes. Through the fellowship we can contribute to the use of these data sets to help junior scholars build their research capacity and to stimulate broader use of these data by other scholars.”

This AERA initiative was developed through discussions with AERA Executive Director Levine and Christine Bachrach, Chief of the NICHD Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch and Interim Director of the National Institutes of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. With the benefit of the Spencer Foundation support, an AERA team consisting of Levine, Muller, and George Wimberly, AERA Director of Social Justice and Professional Development, is leading this effort through the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Fellows will receive travel and lodging support to attend the 2008 Add Health Users Conference and the 2009 AERA Annual Meeting, including the post-Meeting capstone retreat. In addition, the Spencer Foundation funding has allowed for the support of six additional travel awards to paper presenters using these data at the Add Health Users Conference this July (see Table 2). Please direct any questions about this fellowship to proflevel@aera.net. For further information on the data sets, you can visit the Add Health (www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth) and AHAA (www.prc.utexas.edu/ahaa/) websites.

Table 1
Recipients of the AERA Research Fellowship in Education and Adolescent Health

| Fellow | Institution | Project Title |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Michael Bishop | University of Chicago | Grades or Popularity? |
| Jennifer Flashman | University of California, Los Angeles | Change and Stability in Adolescent Friendship Networks |
| Jason Fletcher | Yale University | Do High School Course Patterns or Attributes Determine College Selectivity? |
| Samantha Francois | Tulane University | Pathways Through Which Neighborhoods Affect Adolescents' Educational Outcomes |
| Michael Gottfried | University of Pennsylvania | Sexuality and Achievement: The Effect of Defining Identities on Academic Outcomes |
| Emily Greenman | Pennsylvania State University | Does Acculturation Lower Educational Achievement for Children of Immigrants? |
| Cecily R. Hardaway | University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill | Community Violence Exposure and the Academic Achievement of Adolescents |
| Dominique E. Johnson | Temple University | Investigating the Gender Divide in Academic Course Taking: Relationships Between School Engagement and Achievement in High School Math and Science Courses Among Students of Color |
| R. L'Heureux Lewis | City College of New York, CUNY | Which Friends Matter? The Role of Proximal and Distal Friends in Academic and Post-Secondary Outcomes |
| Jessica E. McCrory | University of Pennsylvania | Structured Opportunities: The Effects of School and Neighborhood Socioeconomic Composition on College Attendance |
| Gina M. Panno | Virginia Commonwealth University | Adolescents at Risk for High School Dropout: The Influence of Individual, Social, and Contextual Factors on Students' Graduation Status |
| Morgan Polikoff | University of Pennsylvania | Sexuality and Achievement: The Effect of Defining Identities on Academic Outcomes |
| Maria Rendon | Harvard University | Transition Into Young Adulthood: The Role of Neighborhoods on School and Work Outcomes: A Focus on the Mexican-Origin Group |
| Martin Santos | University of Wisconsin, Madison | Social Relations in Flux: Effects of Dynamic Friendship Networks on Academic Achievement |

Table 2
Recipients of Travel Award for Add Health Users Conference, July 24–25, 2008

| Recipient | Institution | Paper Title |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Yael Brinbaum | Institute of Research in Education | The School Careers of Immigrant Children in France and in the United States |
| Ping Chen | University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill | Assimilated to College Education? Intergenerational and Inter-Class Mobility of Second Immigrant Generation |
| Katholiki Georgiades | McMaster University | The Moderating Influence of School Context on Emotional-Behavioral Adjustment Among Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Adolescents |
| Jennifer Humensky | University of Chicago | The Effect of Mental Health in Adolescence on Educational Attainment: School and Neighborhood Factors |
| Ingrid Nelson | Stanford University | Extracurricular Activity Participation and Hispanic Adolescents' Pathways to College |
| Sara Skiles | University of Notre Dame | Are School Activities Racializing? Measuring Meaning Structures in School |