



FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY
Applications due December 13, 2023

Application portal can be accessed at <https://applycasbs.stanford.edu/summerapplication/>

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

Organizations and Their Effectiveness

July 7 through July 20, 2024

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 sixth CASBS summer institute on *Organizations and Their Effectiveness* will occur from July 7 through July 20, 2024, at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences on the Stanford University campus. Fifteen fellowships will be awarded to cover tuition, room and board, and travel.

There are two important dates in the application process: (1) the complete application, including the letter of support, is *due* December 13, 2023; and (2) fellowship awards will be announced by email no later than January 29, 2024.

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 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 organized activities.

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.

In response to this situation, the 2024 summer institute will begin with presentations about how economics and sociology approach the study of organizations (with other disciplines to follow). In addition, to build community, there will be frequent group discussions and projects (“hacks”) on thorny organizational ideas and problems, as well as dinner conversations with scholars and practitioners who have been deeply involved in the worlds of politics, law, journalism and business. In sum, the first week will be a very intensive experience.

Besides the two directors, the full-time participants in the first week will be young scholars (ranging from advanced assistant professors to late-stage graduate students) drawn from a wide range of disciplines and fields (not just economics and sociology; typically also political science, communications, organizational behavior and strategy), 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.

The first week will also include a “guest chef”—a senior scholar studying organizations from outside economics and sociology—who will visit for about 24 hours, typically involving both

lectures and a hack.

The second week will be in two phases. On Monday and Tuesday July 15 and 16, the full-time participants and spirit of the first week will continue. There will probably be a second guest chef, representing another discipline or methodology.

Then, on Wednesday, July 17 through Friday, July 19, participants from the fifth summer institute (2023) will be invited back to CASBS to join in a convocation with the 2024 cohort, concluding with dinner on Friday. Finally, on Saturday, July 20, the group will return to being just the directors and the 2024 full-time participants, with the institute concluding over lunch.

The second part of the second week (Wednesday, July 17 through Friday, July 19) may also include a few members of the first four cohorts (2016–19). Naturally, members of the early cohorts are now further along in their careers than the new participants in 2024 will be—albeit less far along than the senior scholars who serve as guest chefs. Also, members of the early cohorts represent a wide range of the disciplines and fields that study organizations and other organized activities; for example, fewer than half are from economics or sociology. The convocation on July 17–19 of the 2024 summer institute may leverage the expertise of the early cohorts to emphasize additional disciplines and fields studying organizations (perhaps in smaller versions of the guest-chef role described above).

ELIGIBILITY

Those eligible to apply include junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows and very advanced graduate students 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 arrive prepared by having read a syllabus of about 20 key papers and surveys.

LOCATION

The Center is located on a beautiful hillside overlooking the Stanford University campus. Comfortable studies in restful surroundings will be provided.

SUPPORT

Admitted applicants will be offered a fellowship that will 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 a participant's home institution would be greatly appreciated.

APPLICATION

The application consists of: (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 support, 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, and is an external faculty member of the Santa Fe Institute. He, too, teaches an organization theory seminar that attracts PhD students from more than a half dozen departments and schools. Both Gibbons and Powell are former CASBS fellows, and each co-directed a previous summer institute at CASBS before starting this long-running program on Organizations and Their Effectiveness.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN PAST SUMMER INSTITUTES

Laura Adler, Organizational Behavior, Yale SOM – “I wanted to thank you so much for a truly extraordinary experience at CASBS this summer. It was such an incredible two weeks. The workshop expanded my conceptual framework for understanding organizations—in broad ways and also in ways that will apply directly to my current research. And the greatest gift was meeting so many incredible colleagues and friends. Learning to engage across disciplinary lines, to think in terms of models, and to consider opportunities and methods for transposing concepts, especially from culture to economics and back—these are skills that apply directly to my current work and I’m sure will inform future projects over the long term. I’m so grateful to you both for imagining this opportunity and for guiding us through a truly engaging, provocative, and enriching series of conversations. Thank you for letting me join this extraordinary community. I feel like I really found a new home. Most of all, I’m excited to continue the discussion in the years to come.” (2023)

Alessandria Fenizia, Economics, George Washington University – “The Summer Institute was a fantastic experience, both professionally and personally. It was a unique opportunity to learn how other fields think about organizations. I have a strong quantitative training and the Summer Institute exposed me to high-quality qualitative research and methods. It completely blew my mind. I walked away with a new vocabulary and a deep appreciation for the strengths of qualitative research. On a personal level, I had the privilege of meeting talented and thoughtful researchers from various social sciences who were genuinely interested in learning how other disciplines engage with the same topics. We engaged in riveting discussions on concepts that as an economist I have learned to take for granted. Being able to see these concepts through the eyes of colleagues with different training was extremely refreshing. I also had the opportunity to meet with some fantastic researchers in my field I knew through their work, but never met in person. I had high expectations going into the summer institute, but I could not imagine how transformative it would be for how I think about research.” (2023)

Paul-Henri Moisson, Economics, University of Toulouse – “Thank you so much for everything these last two weeks! There will be a clear before/after CASBS for me, for several reasons. Of course, the lectures, talks and discussions have vastly broadened my intellectual horizons and will change my approach to research. But in addition, meeting with the other participants has been invaluable. A quantifiable hint is that I have collected more than 40 book recommendations over the last two weeks (academic and fiction). But friendship remains invaluable, and I strongly look forward to future meetings and discussions! These learning and friendships were made possible thanks to the summer institute’s format and energy.” (2023)

Samantha Ortiz Casillas, Public Administration, Centro de Investigacion y Docencia, Mexico City – “I’ve been back at work for a week now and found myself deeply missing our two weeks together. I think I’ve shared most of this with you while we were at CASBS but I feel lucky to have been a part of such a unique experience. The reason why I wanted a career in academia was to have the opportunity to always be learning new things, be intellectually challenged by people I admire and respect, and think deeply about important social issues and how we can make them better. This, I believe, is what you managed to facilitate over those two weeks.” (2023)

Fiona Shen-Bayh, Government & Politics, University of Maryland – “I think one of the many things that made this institute really special was the people you selected to participate—not just the guest chefs, but also the cohort fellows themselves. Hearing about your selection criteria for our cohort was illuminating and your formula seems to have paid off: I genuinely enjoyed getting to know people from different disciplines and methodological backgrounds working on so many types of organizations. Many of our conversations (both at the conference table and the dining table) were not focused on drawing disciplinary boundaries, but rather on learning a shared vocabulary. The camp-like quality of the institute is unlike anything else I’ve ever experienced in academia; it felt less like strategic networking and more like intellectual community building. Which is particularly remarkable given the length of the institute. Two weeks isn’t much time in the grand scheme of things!” (2023)

Ben Shestakovsky, Sociology, University of Pennsylvania – “It is truly a privilege to have been given this opportunity to read and talk and ask big questions at a remove from the daily routines that make it so hard to do that kind of deep thinking. I am so grateful to have been given the space to do this work. I don’t know how you did it, but you managed to gather a group of brilliant, generous, and thoroughly hilarious people from across the social sciences. It really did feel like “nerd camp”—spending two intensive weeks with these folks allowed us all to build relationships that will last for years. What’s more, these are the kinds of relationships that are strong enough to launch new lines of inquiry and sustain one’s motivation over the long haul. How very rare, and how very exciting. Our time together will transform my practices. The spirit of openness, of free-flowing conversation rooted in precise definitions, relevant examples, and an embrace of the frontiers of knowledge—these are things that each of you, both master teachers in your own right, brought to our discussions each day, providing a model that I feel inspired to emulate (as best I can).” (2023)

Lindsey Cameron, Organizational Behavior, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania – “Beyond Woody and Bob, who are phenomenal beyond words, and creating a safe space, where

ideas can be expressed, shaped, and challenged, I learned the most from speakers and participants who are in the fields adjacent to me where there was a common language, but completely different ways of thinking about similar problems. I really appreciated the great mix of people Bob and Woody put together. I was so impressed folks traveled around the world to be one-day guest chefs, especially Adam Reich. I was unaware of his work before, and I'm now deeply engaging with some of his ideas after several long conversations." (2019)

Raissa Fabregas, Economics, LBJ School, University of Texas, Austin – "The institute helped me set up a 'mental scaffolding' to structure ideas around the interactions that occur within organizations, especially around culture, governance and economic transactions. In the long-run, one of my main takeaways has to do with how I will want to go about my own research. The institute has helped me re-think the importance of asking the 'right' questions, even if the answers may lie outside traditional disciplinary boundaries. These two weeks were a pleasant reminder of why I got into research in the first place." (2019)

Mako Hill, Information Sciences, University of Washington – "The summer institute was absolutely exhilarating. I cannot remember another two-week period of my life that was as intensely generative of new ideas, as disruptive of old ones, or as intellectually transformative. I left inspired to tackle big ideas about organizing in the communities I study." (2019)

Winnie Jiang, Organizational Behavior, INSEAD (Singapore) – "I would like to express my most sincere appreciation for this invaluable opportunity to participate in the CASBS summer institute. The two weeks has been without a doubt the most transformative inspiring experience for me. The summer institute broadened my horizons, deepened my thinking, and equipped me with the interdisciplinary knowledge and insights to improve both my current and future research, all of which are extremely helpful and motivating as I transition into an assistant professor role." (2019)

Martin Williams, Political Science, Blavatnik School, University of Oxford – "The Summer Institute was the learning experience I wish that graduate school had been, and probably the most profound academic experience I've ever had. I wish every scholar could spend two weeks like this surrounded by brilliant peers, stretching their minds and developing new ways of asking questions. Bob and Woody architected the two weeks beautifully: it was evident from the start how much thought and effort had gone not just into scheduling and lectures but also into building a culture. In that sense, the Summer Institute was a perfect model of how good organization can be transformative!" (2019)

Charles Angelucci, Economics, MIT Sloan – "Allow me to thank you once more for two ***fantastic*** weeks. I have chosen to be an academic because of these (rare) moments. I feel truly fortunate and am immensely grateful. Many of the readings have made a deep impression on me and I have written down at least a dozen ideas for potential future projects. I have no doubt that I will embark on a few on these projects (two in particular I cannot stop thinking about). I hope one day to be able to give to others what you have given us." (2018)

Giulia Cappellaro, Social and Political Sciences, Bocconi University, Milan – "Besides the what of research, I also learned important aspects of the how to do research. The institute

fosters an open dialogue where ideas and concepts are analyzed and reanalyzed through multiple lenses over two weeks and this allowed developing a critical and well-rounded understanding beyond single disciplines.” (2018)

Mai Hassan, Political Science, MIT – “The ideas/approaches that were both new to me and the most useful for my research are those that focus on the importance of inter-organizational dynamics. Before this fortnight, I hadn’t thought too much about relational contracts within and between organizations, and how relationships are built/sustained, and how they vary. I could probably have learned about this at my home school, but I didn’t know what I should’ve been looking for and I wouldn’t have learned it in the same way.” (2018)

Dan Honig, Public Policy, University College London – “These two weeks felt about as open and collaborative as with any group I’ve ever been exposed to. I take away a sense there are many others engaged in similar efforts to my own, interested in borrowing (and stealing) from across traditional boundaries in pursuit of knowledge and tools for better understanding the world.” (2018)

Henning Piezunka, Strategy, INSEAD (France) – “The institute was incredibly rich and refreshing. I learned about concepts that were completely new to me, and also saw ideas that I already knew in a new light.” (2018)

Celene Reynolds, Sociology, Indiana University – “It was an incredible experience—the best two weeks of my academic life. I had high expectations going in, but they were exceeded in every respect. The group was exceptional. The vibe was not at all competitive; it was clear that we were all there to learn from one another and to build a community. I loved hearing how people from different disciplines responded to the ideas—this was educational in itself.” (2018)

Erica Robles-Anderson, Media, Culture and Society, New York University – “I think one of the most important aspects of this workshop was settling in to embrace the kind of scholarly career I’m going to have. Bob and Woody, and all the guest chefs are expert border crossers; all have a sparkle in their eye. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to see people really dive into their enthusiasms, work hard, and keep smiling. We think a lot in academia about the field changing ideas, but this felt like getting a moment to absorb the habitus of field changers, folks invested in a way of being as part of the scholarly life.” (2018)

Angela Aristidou, Organizational Behavior, University College London – “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)

Richard Benton, Sociology, School of Labor & Employment Relations, University of Illinois – “The informal discussions with participants led me to think about my own work and career differently. Meeting young scholars, at a similar career stage as myself, across disciplines also exposed me to more career opportunities and pathways within academia. The structure of the

cross-disciplinary groups worked well—the discussions of what could be borrowed from other disciplines was a great invitation for us to really engage with work outside our home discipline but avoid growing defensive or somehow enforcing disciplinary boundaries.” (2017)

Claudine Gartenberg, Strategy, 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)

Jennifer Hadden, Political Science, University of Maryland – It is unlikely that I would have encountered this kind of discussion at my institution, where disciplines tend to work in silos. I appreciated that this interdisciplinary conversation was both substantive and meaningful, but also conducted in a spirit of genuine openness.” (2017)

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)

Chris Rea, Sociology, Glenn College, Ohio State University – “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)

Nate Wilmers, Sociology, Work and Organization Studies, MIT Sloan – “The Summer Institute is a rare setting in contemporary academic life: a focus on big ideas, rather than narrow research projects; cross-disciplinary discussion, rather than publishing games playing; and, as a result, real progress on important substantive issues. In my years of involvement with the community, I’ve learned about bureaucrats from political scientists; group competition from an evolutionary anthropologist; how hippies shaped Silicon Valley from a historian; fundamentals of organizational economics ... a whole series of insights and perspectives that I never would have stumbled across in my local research area, but which has deepened and molded my work.” (2017)

Consuelo Amat, Political Science, Johns Hopkins – “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)

Christof Brandtner, Sociology, emlyon Business School, France – “Organizations nerd camp was the best two weeks of my academic life thus far.” (2016)

Russell Funk, Strategy, Carlson School, University of Minnesota – “The summer institute introduced me to (and got me excited about) current work in organizational economics. Even though I could have accessed relevant materials beforehand, the summer institute gave me the opportunity to do the reading, and most importantly, learn it together with outstanding colleagues and leaders in the field.” (2016)

Mike Powell, Economics, 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)

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 the 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)