

# Positive Psychology Templeton Fellows Program

## Funding Opportunity: Call for Applications

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The Positive Psychology Network, with generous support from the John Templeton Foundation, is pleased to launch the Positive Psychology Templeton Fellows Program for the third year. This program aims to recognize and encourage the best and brightest among the rising generation of scholars by creating and funding collaborations with senior scholars.

We are interested in outstanding scholars and scientists, generally, from the disciplines of Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology, Theology, Neuroscience, Economics, History, Public Health and Medicine. *In addition, we are particularly interested in young scholars from these disciplines who focus on religion, purpose, and spirituality.*

There will be two kinds of Fellows: Positive Psychology Templeton Senior Fellows (for full or associate professors in mid-career or later, holding a doctoral degree) and Positive Psychology Templeton Junior Fellows (for graduate students pursuing a doctoral degree, postdocs, or early-career assistant professors).

Awardees will enter into collaborations with one or more of the project coordinators on one or more of the projects that they direct.

The project coordinators are: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Claremont), Martin Seligman (Penn), and George Vaillant (Harvard).

### **The projects are:**

- 1) The study of spirituality in successful lives (Vaillant)
- 2) The study of Psychological Capital (Csikszentmihalyi)

A detailed description of each project is below.

### **The Mechanism of the Awards:**

**For the period from approximately May 14 through July 1 of 2007**, the senior fellows and the junior fellows, along with the project coordinators, will be in residence at the Positive Psychology Center of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. During this time (somewhat flexible, depending on the research project) the specific research and collaboration will be planned and then it will be executed over the following year. Two weeks or more (to be arranged) will also be spent in residence at the home site of the relevant senior fellows. Fellowships are awarded for one year, but they may be renewed by the selection committee for an additional year.

The Senior Fellow stipend will be \$14,000 plus travel and living expenses. Half will be paid after the Philadelphia conference, half at the end of the year of participation. Relevant research expenses may also be available.

The Junior Fellow award will be \$4,000 plus travel and living expenses. Half will be paid after the Philadelphia conference, half at the end of the year of participation. Relevant research expenses may also be available.

## **Selection Criteria**

Successful applicants must demonstrate most or all of the following: (i) talent and future promise as a researcher; (ii) talent and future promise as a communicator of ideas; (iii) a passion to make a substantial contribution to the benefit of others through research of the highest quality and scientific rigor; (iv) *a focus on religion, spirituality, or noble purpose in relation to positive psychology*; (v) having the resources and personnel in place to conduct relevant research at the home site.

## **Eligibility**

There is no age limitation for applicants. Applicants from all subfields within psychology (e.g., social-personality, developmental, cognition, neuroscience, health, clinical) and *from theology, anthropology, neuroscience, economics, philosophy, sociology and history* are sought. Applicants for Senior Fellow will usually hold the Ph.D. or its equivalent, and will typically be a full or associate professor in mid-career or later, at a university or college. Applicants for Junior Fellow will usually be a full time graduate student pursuing a doctorate in any relevant discipline, a postdoc, or an early-career assistant professor. Exceptions to any of the eligibility requirements may be made for extremely promising candidates. Candidates from outside North America are particularly encouraged.

Applications will be accepted until December 15, 2006. The selection committee will review the applications and endeavor to notify awardees by February 2007. Individuals must be free to come to the University of Pennsylvania from about May 14 to July 1, 2007 and then to spend two more weeks (to be arranged) at their project coordinator's research site.

## **Application Procedure:**

Complete applications must include:

1. A 2-3 page (500-800 words, excluding references) description of your interests, resources, and relevance to one or more of the research projects and to Positive Psychology;
2. A curriculum vitae
3. One relevant publication
4. Three letters of recommendation. The letter of recommendation should not only address the applicant's research promise in general, but also the applicant's fit to Positive Psychology, including an evaluation of the applicant's ongoing research, resources needed to carry out the relevant research, and the relevance of their work to the research program.

We ask applicants and letter writers to send their materials electronically to the Positive Psychology Center, c/o Peter Schulman at [schulman@psych.upenn.edu](mailto:schulman@psych.upenn.edu).

**Following is a description of the projects:**

## Description of Research Projects

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The two projects are:

- Spirituality and Living Well
- Psychological Capital

### 1) Spirituality and Living Well (George Vaillant)

George Vaillant will be pursue two interrelated projects. The first project (nearly completed) has been on the role of spirituality in successful living. The second project, and the focus on work in 2006, will be the elaboration and comparison of eight empirical research models of positive mental health.

This project will be an evidence-based evaluation of eight models of positive mental health. For forty years, Vaillant has been continuing three prospective studies of healthy adult development with 824 men and women. The samples include men at both ends of the social spectrum. By examining both the relevant literature and data collected in over thirty waves and over half a century of prospective study, Vaillant is attempting to integrate and to evaluate the success of different definitions of the good life. These eight models include: (1) The General Assessment of functioning using Axis V of the DSM IV, (2) Social and emotional intelligence, (3) Erik Erikson's model of a widened social radius, (4) Subjective well-being as outlined by Diener (5) Maturity of involuntary coping mechanisms as proposed by Vaillant, (6) Spiritual and religious commitment as developed by Templeton, Ardel and Vaillant during the Medici conference in 2005), (7) General social and ego maturation as proposed by Loevinger and Menninger, and (8) A positive attributional style and the 24 strengths as developed by Peterson and Seligman.

At the present time, we plan to personally interview a fresh sample of individuals in order to flesh out the complexity of what is meant by the good life.

Vaillant's time at the Center will also permit the mentored sharing of his 60-year data set on adult development with interested Templeton Senior and Junior Fellows. Besides containing rich documentation of positive mental health and complete medical data on physical health collected every five years, the Study of Adult Development includes separate measures of planfulness, altruism, generativity, charitable giving, religiosity, spirituality and positions on important moral issues (e.g. the McCarthy Hearings, civil rights, Viet Nam, Iraq etc). Since a major limitation on any one individual writing about either mental health or spirituality is autistic, parochial, and idiosyncratic thinking, the opportunity to consider these topics in dialogue with the other fellows should be enriching for all concerned.

### 2) Psychological Capital (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Jeanne Nakamura).

Psychological capital refers to *the psychic resources a person develops so as to secure rewards from the present moment, while also building resources for obtaining such rewards in the future*. The ability to use psychic energy is the main resource that makes possible the formation of psychological capital. There are vast individual differences in the ability to use psychic energy, and these account for some of the most important differences in the outcome of individual lives.

Drs. Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura will invite a number of colleagues from around the world, as well as interested Junior and Senior Fellows, for a series of overlapping research workshops on topics that will

change each year. During the workshops, specialized knowledge about the thematic issues will be integrated and recorded. The research ideas generated in the workshops will be elaborated during the following year, and completed as a series of articles or a book in the course of the next year's residence, in parallel with conducting another series of workshops on a new theme. We also expect that new forms of collaboration involving interested participants will arise, especially when we have developed measures and research designs appropriate to the concepts that will have emerged from the workshops.

The first year's theme focused on the most basic conceptual issue confronting a thorough understanding of how psychological capital is formed, namely: *What do we know about the voluntary control of attention?* This issue, which intrigued some of the most eminent psychologists of the 19th Century like Ribot and James, is ready for re-examination in light of new knowledge. Discussions included operationalization of the construct, and the implications that the conceptual models have for this. Two collaborations have resulted from the first year's meetings, involving participants from Claremont Graduate University, The University of Rochester, The Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, and George Mason University.

The major topic to be probed during the upcoming second year concerns the question, *How is psychological capital formed?* Following on the first set of discussions, we would investigate the practices that lead children to develop habits of control over attention, and habits of attention investment in challenging goals that are enjoyable at the moment, as well as promise to make enjoyable experiences likely later in life.

This set of issues involves not only the acquisition of habits and strengths in childhood and adolescence, but also the way in which new forms of enjoyment are developed in the second half of life. As the demographic profile of the population gets skewed further towards old age, it is important to consider not only how accumulated capital is spent in the later years, but also what new forms of meaningful experience can be accessed, and how.