Undergraduate Research Opportunities

**Western River Action Project**

Conduct an internet search for river-related action groups or organizations in the Intermountain West states and build a database to be used in further research on Western US rivers.

Gain research experience in systematic information searching and database construction and learn about action groups focused on rivers in the Western US. Good organizational skills are required. Further involvement in research after the database is constructed is possible, but not required. Work can be done for independent study credit, an honors project, or hourly wage for up to 50 hours at $10/hour.

Prof. Courtney Flint – Sociology – courtney.flint@usu.edu
Timing: Fall 2020

**Utah Wellbeing Project**

We send teams of students out to Utah cities and towns to conduct interviews and gather survey data from local people.

Questions relate to perceptions of overall wellbeing (e.g. happiness, life satisfaction, etc.), wellbeing domains (e.g. physical and mental health, safety and security, living standards, social connections, connection to nature, etc.), and the role of landscape features (mountains, rivers, farmland, etc.) in personal and community wellbeing. Surveys are conducted on iPads. Additional research opportunities on this project include project planning and logistics, transcribing interviews, and processing and analyzing data.

Gain first hand field research experience and be part of a fun research team connected to real people in real places! Earn independent study credit and/or submit an URCO proposal for project funding (application deadline Oct 15). CHaSS summer mentoring grants are another possibility. Travel expenses are covered. Project likely to extend into May and early June so preference is for students who can work beyond the end of the semester. Good communication and “people” skills and attention to detail are required.

Prof. Courtney Flint – Sociology – courtney.flint@usu.edu
Timing: Spring 2020
Why Do Immigrant Women Go West? Explaining Sex Ratio Variation in U.S. Migration

While U.S. cities with a long history of receiving immigrants (such as New York and Los Angeles) are home to about equal numbers of male and female immigrants, cities that have only received immigrants since the 1990s (which includes cities from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Columbus, Ohio, to here in Logan) show a surprising pattern. Cities and towns in the South and Midwest attract large numbers of male immigrants, while those in the West attract more women. The purpose of this research is to explain why.

What makes a specific city attractive to immigrants, and how does that attraction differ by gender (as well as by other factors such as country of origin, age, marital status, and whether one has children)? At this stage of the research, I am compiling publicly available data (mostly Census data) on 486 U.S. cities and rural areas, including their economic and demographic characteristics, and matching those with the characteristics of people who recently moved to those cities/rural areas. An interested undergraduate student could help with this data collection process, and also get some training/experience with data analysis and statistical modelling once the data collection is done.

No funding at this point in time, unfortunately.
Prof. Erin Hofmann—erin.hofmann@usu.edu

Fracking in Tribal Areas of Utah

Drs. Soyer and Schad are seeking undergraduate research assistants to help with a project aimed at understanding how residents of tribal areas in Utah perceive oil and gas development to be impacting their daily lives and communities. While much research has been conducted in non-tribal communities on the impacts of fracking and energy development, little has been done in tribal communities despite high levels of oil and gas development. In this project we will work with tribal leaders and tribal members to collect information that will be beneficial in community development but that can also increase our understanding of the impacts of energy development. Students can help in ways that they are interested, including, but not limited to: being trained to and conducting interviews, transcribing interviews, designing and implementing a mail/online survey of community residents, analyzing interview and/or survey data, and writing and publishing peer-reviewed publications. We would also encourage students to apply who have an interest in disseminating the research findings both within the study communities and to academic audiences. While no funding is currently available, we are working to secure funds and opportunities may become available for conducting research and travel.

Professors Mehmet Soyer and Jessica Ulrich-Schad—jessica.schad@usu.edu