

Quantifying the Impact of Mentorships on Human and Social Capital

Position: Research Assistant

Supervisors: SFI postdoctoral fellows, James O'Dwyer, Clio Andris

Suggested dates for internship: July 1st—August 23rd 2013

Location: Santa Fe Institute

Sponsoring organization: Frost Foundation

Stipend: \$2250/month, pro rated

Desired skills: Interest in social systems, dexterity with basic statistics and census data, GIS experience preferred. Undergraduate degree required

Duties: Collection and analysis of census and mentorship data, synthesis of the extent to which mentorships increase human and social capital via urban connectivity

Project:

With nearly 70,000 residents, Santa Fe, New Mexico is a broad and diverse community, but the integration of this diverse population has not always been realized due to a lack of relationships across social, economic, and educational boundaries. Mentorships are a special kind of relationship that pervades social capital traditionally found in family, friend and peer networks, and connects diverse members of the community. We aim to discover the impact of mentorships on a young person's human and social capital in Santa Fe and develop a salient methodology for measuring the impact of relationships on social capital and city connectivity for use in other communities.

In the interdisciplinary tradition of the Santa Fe Institute, our analysis will draw from multiple fields including educational research, social network theory, computational social science and geographic information science. We base our analysis on twelve years' data and expertise from Santa Fe's Monte del Sol high school mentorship program, and programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters. Given that social capital peaks when community members can access diverse economic and cultural resources through durable social connections, we aim to quantify the unique bridges that the mentoring connections make between people of different household incomes, ethnicities and neighborhoods. One might expect the differences between mentor and protégé will be recognizable, and we aim to describe these ties with meaningful metrics to provide important insights for the future development of social capital in our community.