

Q15.

**Innovation[X] Special Call for COVID-19 Proposals**

The **COVID-19** global pandemic and economic, social, and cultural disruptions it has caused will be the subject of studies for years to come. The School of Innovation is calling for proposals directly related to the study of the Coronavirus pandemic and its effects. Special consideration will be given to proposals that address community impacts of the pandemic.

Teams must consist of an interdisciplinary set of faculty members and a multidisciplinary team of 10-20 students, both undergraduate and graduate, from across the university. Proposals should demonstrate a team-based approach to a complex problem and include meaningful deliverables.

**Proposals are due May 1, 2020.**

Q18. Project Title

Effective Communication Strategies During COVID-19

Q22. *Please provide the following information for the Primary Point of Contact for the Project (Project Leader)*

Q1. Prefix

Dr

Q19. First Name

Chaitanya

Q20. Last Name

Lakkimsetti

Q17. Email Address

clakkimsetti@tamu.edu

Q21. Phone Number

## Q5. Gender Identity

- Man
- Woman
- Trans Man
- Trans Woman
- Genderqueer
- Non-Binary/Gender non-conforming
- Not listed above, please specify
- Prefer not to respond

Q16.  
Ethnic and Racial Identity

- Hispanic/Latino/a/x
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian/Pacific Islander/Desi-American
- Black/African American
- White
- Bi-racial / Multi-Racial (please specify):
- Not listed (please specify):
- Prefer not to respond

Q53. *Project Information*

Q3. Please provide brief background/context for the issue this project seeks to address. (1,200 character maximum)

This is a multi-disciplinary mixed-methods project looking at the impact of social distancing messages on communities during COVID-19. Social distancing as a public health strategy has been key to flattening the curve and successfully handling the pandemic. This study will focus on how communities respond to social distancing messages. It will investigate how individuals respond to social distancing policies implemented at the national and local levels, depending on factors such as race/ethnicity, gender and social class. In particular, this project will explore the role of community leadership, media sources, frequency and alignment of messages in affecting whether a community responded positively or negatively to social distancing messages. Focusing our research on Brazos and Harris counties, we will generate recommendations for effective behavior change communication strategy; draft policy relevant reports and articles; design a website that highlights the lived experiences of Texans and Aggies in particular; and build an epidemiological model that incorporates behavioral responses and interactions between individuals to simulate the effects of future public health outbreaks.

Q8. What are the goals for this project? (3,000 character maximum)

We approach social distancing messages as a communication strategy that targets behavioral change. Behavioral change communication strategies are at the center of contemporary community based public health interventions (World Health Organization 2012) and in these strategies sources of communication vary widely from one community to another. Specifically, in the dissemination of social distancing messages community-leaders (religious, political or other), social media, news programs, health-experts, government, and religious organizations have been at the forefront. We have four overall goals for this project: The first goal of this project is to determine what are the main sources of social distancing messages in two Texan counties, namely Harris and Brazos. The second goal is examining the effectiveness of social distancing messages. We aim to investigate whether people are following social distancing messages disseminated by these sources. Harris and Brazos counties differ in terms of demographic composition and political leanings and we will field surveys in these two counties to investigate how individuals and households respond to social distancing messages. We intend to capture behavioral, socioeconomic, and demographic measures such as race/ethnicity, social class, gender, educational attainment, religion, occupation, health insurance, sick leave, political ideology, migration status, membership to community associations, and consumption of media sources. The third goal is to recruit 20-30 participants into the study to collect the lived experiences and narratives that will complement the survey. The qualitative study will capture how people practiced social distancing and different strategies they used to cope with difficulties during the health crisis. Examples of possible hurdles induced by COVID-19 include lack of child care, juggling work-life balance, strained family dynamics and interpersonal relationships, domestic violence, loneliness, lack of personal space and safety, and job loss and economic insecurities. The fourth goal is to generate models that can be utilized by policymakers and government agencies to better prepare for future public health issues. We will simulate how and why individual, household, and contextual factors affect health outcomes (e.g., transmission, prevalence, and death rates) under different hypothetical scenarios. More specifically, we will estimate agent-based models utilizing inputs from regression results based on survey data, as well as insights from qualitative analysis. This type of model allows researchers to incorporate interactions between individual decisions, behavioral responses, and social networks related to health outcomes at the county level.

**Q9. What are anticipated outcomes from this project? (e.g., publications, website, app, data collection for further research/grant) (1,000 characters maximum)**

1) Policy-relevant research papers and op-eds that would highlight effective communications strategies. We will provide information about communication strategies that are more successful to deal with epidemiological challenges while accounting for individual characteristics. 2) A curated online archive of lived experiences of people in the two counties that will be accessible to researchers, policy makers and the general public. It could eventually become a public project where people can add their stories (e.g., slave archive). 3) External grant proposals (e.g., NIH, NSF and Russell Sage Grant) using preliminary data from the project with a goal to expand the research to other counties, states, and countries. 4) Build epidemiological models to estimate effects of social distancing on health outcomes and to simulate future outbreaks using survey and qualitative data. Our models are innovative for including social aspects and behavior changes to produce forecasts.

**Q10. Is this proposed project an extension of existing work or a new endeavor? (1,200 character maximum)**

This project is a new endeavor, however, all members of the interdisciplinary team bring expertise to successfully achieve the short and long term goals outlined in this project including data collection, mixed methods research, and disease modeling. There has been previous collaboration among some of the members of the team.

**Q11. Is Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval required for this project?**

Yes

**Q54. Team Participants**

**Q12. Please list all Team Leaders below (including yourself), including Prefix, Name, Title, and Department/School.**

Chaitanya Lakkimsetti, Assistant Professor, Sociology & Women's and Gender Studies/CLL Emilce Santana, ACES Fellow & Visiting Assistant Professor, Sociology/CLL

Q25. Do any of the team leaders listed above have plans for a sabbatical or other extended leave away from campus during the 2020-21 academic year? Note: Selecting “yes” will not automatically disqualify a team, but rather will indicate that we need to have a discussion with your team about the nature of the planned leave in relation to the project.

No

Q26. Please list all Team Contributors below, including Name, Title, and Department/School. *Please exclude anyone you already listed as a Team Leader.*

Ernesto Amaral, Assistant Professor, Sociology/CLL Ceyhun Eksin, Assistant Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering/College of Engineering. Jennifer Mercieca, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies/CLL Defne Över, Assistant Professor, Sociology/CLL Maria Perez-Patron, Research Assistant Professor/Director of the Program on Reproductive and Child Health, Epidemiology & Biostatistics/Public Health

Q27. Do you plan to assign someone other than a faculty leader as a “project manager” for your team (i.e., a graduate student, postdoc, staff person)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure yet

Q28. What would be the ideal composition of team members for this project? What majors, disciplines, skills, backgrounds, or perspectives would you like to have on the team? (1,200 characters maximum)

We intend to have a student team of 2 graduate students and 8 undergraduates. Possible sources for the recruitment of undergraduate research assistants include the Aggie Research Scholars Program and the Sociology department’s NSF-funded initiative Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU). Given the mixed-methods nature of the project, we anticipate that this project will attract team members from various disciplines such as Sociology, Epidemiology, Women and Gender Studies, Political Science, Anthropology, Communications, and Public Health.

Q29. Will your team also include any external organizations or individuals as either partners, clients, study subjects, beneficiaries of the work, etc.?

We plan to conduct interviews and field surveys that will require human subjects.

Q55. *Travel*

Q30. Does your proposal include travel for students beyond Bryan/College Station?

- Yes
- No

Q31. Where would the team travel?

We do not expect any travel beyond the Bryan/College Station. For now, we plan to conduct all the in-depth interviews and focus groups using zoom or telephone. When the social distancing measures are lifted we will be able to have face-to-face interviews in Bryan/College Station.

Q32. When do you anticipate that this travel would take place? (e.g., Fall 2020, Spring 2021, some other academic break, TBD)

N/A

Q33. Do you expect that all students selected for the team would be able to travel, or just a select number?

N/A

Q56. *Collaboration with Students*

Q34. How will you facilitate collaborative inquiry on the team? How often and in what format will the team meet? How will you divide tasks? How you will ensure effective management of the project (e.g., appoint a student as a project manager, assign that role to a faculty leader, etc.)? (1,500 character maximum)

Monthly zoom meetings (during the summer and during COVID-19 lockdown) with the entire team to coordinate overall project design, data gathering, and to coordinate graduate and undergraduate teams. Specific teams will meet twice a month or more depending on the requirement (qualitative, quantitative, and modeling). Qualitative tasks (in-depth interviews and focus groups) and website building: Chaitanya Lakkimsetti (Team Leader), Emilce Santana, Defne Över, Jennifer Mercieca. Quantitative tasks (questionnaire and survey design): Emilce Santana (Team Leader), Defne Över, Ernesto Amaral, Maria Perez-Patron. Modeling (integration of qualitative and quantitative data): Ernesto Amaral (Team Leader), Ceyhun Eksin, Maria Perez-Patron.

Q35. What might students gain from their participation (e.g., conducting research directly with subjects, contributing to publications, using language skills)? What unique and differentiated learning opportunities would be available for graduate students? (1,500 character maximum)

The project will give an opportunity for graduate and undergraduate students to participate in current and socially relevant research. We will include both graduate and undergraduate students in all aspects of research including research design, data collection, analysis, modeling and writing policy and research articles. Because of the mixed-methods emphasis of this project they will be trained in sound mixed-methods research design, to contribute theoretically and empirically to their disciplines (Sociology, Communications, Epidemiology, and Industrial Engineering), and to formulate policy-relevant research. Moreover, students will gain exposure to the broader research community by presenting research in conferences and submitting and revising research papers to peer-reviewed journals. Graduate students in particular will receive training in writing research proposals for selective grants and work as team leaders to supervise undergraduate research.

Q57. *Timeline and Budget*

Q13. Identify the timeline for the project, including start, completion and major project milestones.

NOTE - You may use the text box or upload a table or file in the next question.

September 2020: Constitute graduate and undergraduate teams October 2020: Questionnaire & survey design November 2020-January 2021: Data collection February-March 2021: Transcription and data analysis April 2021: Website building May 2021: Modeling

Q36. Timeline Upload (if needed)

[Timeline\\_X\\_grant.pdf](#)

36.1KB

application/pdf

Q37. Total Budget Request (numeric response only, please).

20,000

Q38. You may upload a budget table here encompassing the categories below, or you may complete the fields below through this form as applicable.

For each item listed below or on your budget table upload, please enter both dollar amount and any relevant notes/justification.

[Innovation X\\_budget.pdf](#)

38.7KB

application/pdf

Q39. GRADUATE OR RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP (PHD) (*Suggested range: \$15-18/hour; note: RAships for students in graduate school should include costs for tuition remission and fees*)

Q41. RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP (*Suggested range: \$12-15/hour*)

Q40. INSTRUCTION (Teaching) - PHD STUDENT

Q42. POST-DOCTORAL OR STAFF EFFORT

Q43. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT STIPEND OR WORK STUDY (*Suggested range: \$11-14/hour*)

Q44. INSTRUCTIONAL, RESEARCH OR OFFICE SUPPLIES

Q45. COMPUTERS AND MINOR EQUIPMENT

Q46. TRAVEL - DOMESTIC

Q47. TRAVEL - INTERNATIONAL

Q48. CONTRACT WORK

Q49. MEETINGS - BUSINESS

Q50. OTHER - MISC.

Q51. Please briefly note below any other sources of project funds. (*Projects that match or leverage additional funds are strongly encouraged. Please note any such funds, awarded or proposed, here so that we understand the comprehensive outlay for the project.*)

None

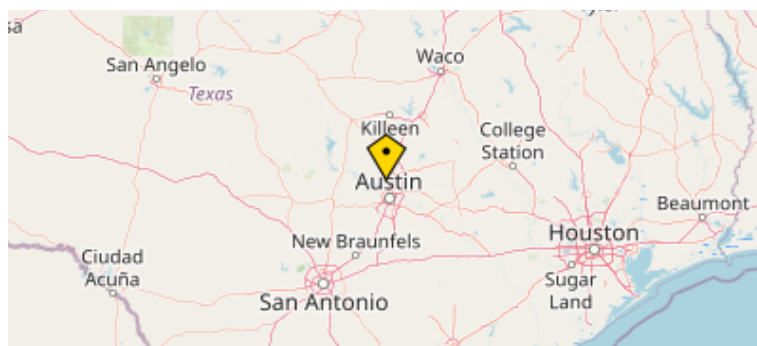
Q52. Please name a Unit/Business Manager who could administer funds for project, if requested:

Sociology/Brynn Pinto

#### Location Data

**Location:** ([30.454803466797, -97.766403198242](#))

**Source:** GeoIP Estimation





## **Innovation X Grant Budget**

- 2 graduate research hires (we will recruit graduate students who are already RAs and TAs). We will pay the graduate students for 6 months for the project design and data collection. The graduate students will get co-authorship for their time and labor during the data analysis and writing period of the project: They would be expected to work 9 hours per week, for approximately 6 months (about 26 weeks). The pay would be \$18 per hour. Based on our calculations, the total costs of 2 hires would be ~\$8500.
  
- We budget ~\$11500 for participant recruitment and paying undergraduate assistants (there is the possibility that they could get course credit in lieu of payment).

## **Innovation X Grant 2020-2021 Timeline**

**September 2020:** Constitute graduate and undergraduate teams

**October 2020:** Questionnaire & survey design

**November 2020-January 2021:** Data collection

**February-March 2021:** Transcription and data analysis

**April 2021:** Website building

**May 2021:** Modeling