



UC SANTA BARBARA

2024/25 Gretler Undergraduate Fellows Application

The Economics department is accepting applications for the **Gretler Fellows Program**. The Gretler Fellows program pairs undergraduate students interested in research with faculty members who have a need for a research assistant on a specific project. This is a competitive application process. Individuals chosen as Gretler Fellows will work on the specified project approximately 5 hours per week from October 2024 through June 2025 and earn a \$1,800 stipend (awarded over 3 quarters), but will not be eligible to receive units.

To apply, you must submit the following to the **Career Connection office, North Hall 2119** or email to courtneyjerge@ucsb.edu with the subject line "Gretler Fellows":

- **This application**
- **Resume**
- **Personal statement** explaining your interest in doing economic research (500-word max).
- **Unofficial transcript**

YOU WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED IF YOU ARE MISSING ANY OF THE MATERIALS LISTED ABOVE.

- **Application due: October 4th by 5:00 PM**

A complete application (this application on top, resume, personal statement and unofficial transcript) is due no later than 5:00 PM on Wednesday, October 9th.

Name _____ Perm # _____ Year: **2 3 4** (circle one)

U-Mail _____ Major(s) _____

When do you plan to graduate? _____

A faculty panel will review all applications, and will pair students with faculty members.

A list of faculty projects is listed on the following pages. Please review all projects and rank each one.

Please rank your interest in all of the following faculty research projects from 1-11; 1 being most interested and 11 being least interested.

_____ **Professor Kelly Bedard**

I need a student to help build a data set that links faculty and graduate students across generations to explore productivity and opeer effects. The student will use ProQuest and websites to collect data and help build the data set. Basic programming knowledge is a positive, but not required.

_____ **Professor Ted Bergstrom**

There is a pending lawsuit against the major commercial journal publishing houses which accuses them of collusion in setting the price paid for referee services at zero, and with imposing other rules that reduce competition. See <https://www.lieffcabraser.com/antitrust/academic-journals/>

or <https://www.vitallaw.com/news/antitrust-news-class-action-accuses-six-largest-scholarly-journal-publishers-of-collusion/ald01c919b4622e5b4d35b6c0681452348cdd>

This is likely to produce interesting new information on journal practices. Whether it does or not, there is room for a careful study of the amounts paid by for-profit and non-profit journals for referee services. Also, it is time for a new study of the price authors must pay for their papers to be published open access and of subscription prices for hybrid journals in which some articles are open access and others are available to subscribers only. This is a matter of great interest to scientists in all disciplines and to universities.

We would plan to produce a journal article reporting our results.

The skills needed are acquaintance with Excel and some statistical knowledge. There is some interesting theory related to these issues. A strong performance in intermediate micro classes would be very useful.

_____ **Professor Javier Birchenall**

Since the mid-1970s, fertility in Japan has remained consistently below replacement levels. After the 1980s, many other countries have been experiencing below-replacement fertility on a consistent basis. This project seeks to examine the economic aspects behind this new demographic phase in the world, by providing a comparative analysis of the fertility of Japanese and American women. The project requires superb data handling abilities and coding, as the first task is to harmonize different (panel) data across the two countries, before empirical work can be carried out. Knowledge of Stata is required, and knowledge of Python and/or R is a plus.

_____ **Professor Olivier Deschennes**

One project is about climate change impacts in the agricultural sector, and learn how farmers can adapt to climate shocks by using inventory adjustments.

Another project is on climate change and health, and in particular how historical climate change has affected longevity globally

Finally one project is on air pollution, and how changes in air pollution affect the demand for medication and health outcomes among the Medicare population.

I am looking for a student who wants to work with data (collecting, assembling and analyzing). There will also be a lot of econometric analysis. They can work with R or Stata, with a preference for Stata.

Professor Ignacio Esponda

I am seeking a research assistant familiar with R, Stata, or similar software, with experience in statistical analysis. The project explores how individuals make decisions under ambiguity, where probabilities are uncertain or unknown, unlike traditional models that assume known risks. We propose an experimental framework that distinguishes between forecasting unknown probabilities and individuals' attitudes toward these forecasts, offering new insights into ambiguity aversion beyond the commonly used Ellsberg paradigm.

Professor Peter Kuhn

This applied microeconomics research project centers around a natural experiment. The fellow will work with census data to learn more about the historical origins of present-day racial inequality. The fellow will work closely with PhD candidate Micah Villarreal under the supervision of Professor Peter Kuhn.

The student will primarily use Excel but there may be opportunities to scrape data, program in Stata/R and/or train a machine learning model, depending on the interests of the student.

Professor Shelly Lundberg

I'd like to have a student assistant to do literature reviews and provide editorial/citation support for the book I'm writing. No data skills needed, just literacy, some online research experience, and willingness to learn Zotero in some depth.

Professor Heather Royer

I'm working on a randomized-controlled experiment on student success to be run across several college campuses in the US in the fall of 2025. For this study, a qualified candidate will work on survey creation in Qualtrics, a literature review, and data analysis in STATA. I'm looking for someone who is a good communicator and is excited to learn new research skills.

Professors David Silver

I am seeking undergraduate research assistant to support my healthcare research. Key tasks will include conducting literature reviews on the mental health of the elderly, collecting and cleaning data on healthcare providers, and performing AI-based text analysis of healthcare inspection reports. The ideal candidate should have strong skills in data analysis and familiarity with AI tools. Your support will enable us to push the boundaries of healthcare research and enhance our understanding of provider practices and elderly mental health.

Professor Dick Startz

Professor Startz is looking for an RA to support programming and data analysis. The prospective Gretler Fellow should be able to work in R at the intermediate level and should be familiar with econometrics at the level of Econ 140A. Some of the projects involve programming in R for analysis of some messy data. Other work will involve downloading data from the web, and re-arranging it for subsequent analysis, conducting initial analysis, and creating illustrative graphics. For examples of past projects on which Gretler Fellows have helped, see (<https://www.brookings.edu/author/dick-startz/>). This year's projects include some highly speculative ideas, so the prospective Gretler Fellow should have a high tolerance for uncertain outcomes!

Professor Alisa Tazhitdinova

I am looking for two students to work on a few projects related to state taxation and how it affects various outcomes. Possible outcomes of interest include vote registration and party affiliation, mortality and birth

rates, workplace injuries, and more. The student will assist me with data collection, data cleaning/formatting, and data analysis. In addition, the student may work on a survey of UCSB students' understanding of tax policy, and on creating a mini-course to correct misperceptions and inform UCSB students about relevant tax rules. For the first set of projects, the ideal candidate will be organized, data-oriented, with attention to detail, and familiar with the basics of statistical analysis. For the second project, an ideal candidate would be comfortable interacting with fellow UCSB students to survey them.