



To: The Members of the Stanford Center on Longevity Advisory Council

From: Amy Yotopoulos, Director, Mind Division

Re: June, 2018 Advisory Council Meeting Update

The Mind Division continues to focus on the areas of engagement, decision-making, perception, and cognitive health. The following are brief highlights and current updates:

Perception

Stanford Task Force on Hearability, and Hearing Loss and Social Engagement

Following our “Improving Communication for People with Hearing Loss” launch conference, we are progressing on a couple of action items:

- We created a “Task Force” at Stanford University to show how public and private spaces on campus could be designed with hearing well in mind, for both people with and without hearing loss. The Task Force submitted a proposal to the Long-Range Planning process initiated by the President of Stanford University. Already, the University has decided to make three more classrooms/auditoriums more “hearable” and are installing sound amplification technology into those spaces.
- We are working with Eargo, a start-up hearing aid company which has designed a better and less expensive hearing aid. Our hypothesis is, does using Eargo lead to improvements in social engagement and in turn, cognitive functioning? We want to study a group of people with mild to moderate hearing loss, half of whom use Eargo and the other half are controls, and follow them over time, assessing both engagement and cognitive function. We will observe short- and long- term changes and bring people into the lab to measure interactions with family members versus strangers. We are currently fine-tuning the proposal, and then will to submit for IRB approval. Several potential funders have expressed interest in supporting the project.
- Irene Mecchi had a great idea that is developing into an exciting social media campaign and research project. We are interested in enlisting famous aging musicians to talk about how important hearing is to their craft and their lives and how hearing aids help them achieve their goals. We have created a vision document and are in discussions with “Friends of Irene” who are in the business. In addition, faculty affiliate Dr. Jonathan Berger is interested in using this campaign in a research project on reducing stigma through innovative hearing aid technology.

- [Stanford Medicine Magazine](#) has dedicated their entire Spring 2018 issue on Listening. One of the articles, [Hear and Now](#), focuses on new technologies in hearing aids, describes our launch conference and interviewed several conference attendees.

Decision-Making

Family Decision-Making Surrounding Life-Threatening Illness

Updates on our work in this space include:

- We will be hosting two Visiting Scholars from Japan whose work focuses on end-of-life issues. [Dr. Mariko Shiozaki](#) and [Dr. Kouhei Masumoto](#) are currently conducting research on cognitive bias in decision-making in older adults, with special attention to satisfaction and regret about choices. They plan to characterize decision-making processes during the end-of-life stage by verifying constituent elements of happiness and regret, as well as the influence of aging in the context of cultural differences.
- Our Mind Division Faculty Leader, Dr. Jeremy Bailenson, published a new book on VR called [Experience on Demand](#) and was [interviewed on KQED](#), where he mentions SCL and our intent to use VR to help make better health decisions. We have met with potential funder [Dr. Shoshana Ungerleider](#) and are currently in discussions about a project together.
- We continue to maintain a close relationship with Stanford's Palliative Medicine Department, with an eye for areas of collaboration and support. We will be participating in their Strategic Planning meeting next month where we will discuss opportunities to develop and submit a PO1 grant.

Engagement

Study of the Benefits of Volunteering—Santa Clara County Project

Since our last meeting, we have sent an additional wave of recruitment emails (to date, 3 waves of recruitment emails have been sent to close to 7000 County employees). Over 130 interested subjects have been referred to the Volunteer Services Manager at the County, and we have piloted a few research subjects. In order to reach retirees, we are now switching our recruitment efforts to regular “snail” mail and are developing the flyers to send out the mailings.

Presentations

- March, 2018: Aging in America Conference Highlighted Session, a presentation with Comfort Keepers “Research with Impact.”
- May, 2018: Association for Psychological Science, 30th Annual Convention “Leveraging Changes in Goal Prioritization Across Adulthood to Promote Volunteering.”

Upcoming Events

Our next launch conference will be the Social Tech and Social Engagement conference on October 2, 2018. The aim of the project is to identify areas for future research as currently,

limited research has examined the impact of social technology engagement across generations and the related effects on social engagement.

Staff, Student and Other Updates

- We oversaw the Winter and Spring quarters of Psych 189 (our Practicum course for undergraduates), creating the syllabus and designing the content, schedule and deliverables. We met weekly with the students as they work on in-depth assignments with our staff. Our students have been primarily helping us develop our new Century Lives podcast series.
- In addition, we coordinated the Winter and Spring quarter Emeriti Lectures, and Dr. Jeremy Bailenson spoke about his new book at the February lecture, and Drs. Iris Litt and Phil Pizzo presented to our Emeriti Council members in May.
- Finally, we have been working closely with Dr. Tamara Sims on The Sightlines Project Social Engagement content, and planning for the next deep dive report due out summer 2019.