



STANFORD  
CENTER ON  
LONGEVITY

# MIND DIVISION

The mission of the Mind Division is to harness the human capital represented in a growing number of mature and talented older citizens. Absent significant disease, aging is associated with an increase in knowledge and expertise, emotional stability and heightened motivation to engage in meaningful work. At the same time, the speed and efficiency of new learning typically declines with age, as does sensory functioning affecting hearing and vision. Such changes can hamper the effectiveness with which people engage with work, families and communities.

## CURRENT PROJECTS

### RESEARCH NETWORK ON DECISION NEUROSCIENCE AND AGING

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) network grant on Decision Neuroscience and Aging ([www.srndna.org](http://www.srndna.org)) was funded in the Fall of 2010. Faculty Affiliate Sam McClure (Stanford, Psychology) is leading the project. The scientific leadership team also includes David Laibson (Harvard, Economics), Laura Carstensen, and Camelia Kuhnen (Northwestern, Finance).



In September 2011, the network hosted a training workshop focused on multilevel regression at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern. In early February 2012, two \$15,000 pilot grants were awarded to research teams new to the decision neuroscience of aging. With these grants, a group from UCLA is exploring the neural systems that support motivational manipulations of memory and applications to real world economic decision making and a group from Temple University is developing a set of laboratory tasks to measure aspects of complex economic decisions such as decumulation behavior. Additional Year 2 activities included publishing a review volume in the Annals of the NYAS and publishing a research topic in Frontiers in Neuroscience.

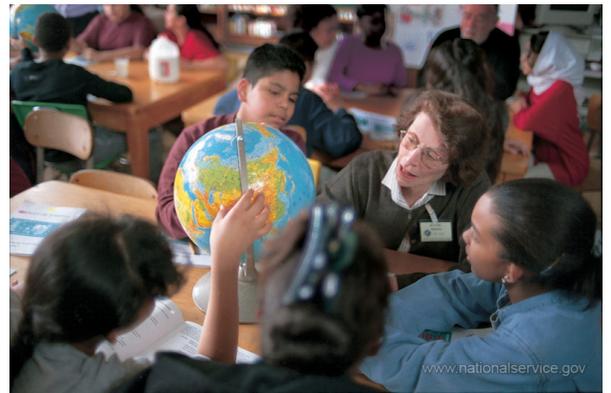
**Next Steps:** *Over the remaining years of this grant, the network will convene a series of conferences, workshops, and will award additional pilot grants.*

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY VOLUNTEERING STUDY

Mounting evidence suggests that volunteering confers substantial psychological and physical benefits to older volunteers, along with obvious gains for communities. The Center has established a partnership with the leadership of the County of Santa Clara, California that will enable research with a large and diverse workforce to better understand volunteering preferences.

With funding from the MacArthur Research Network on an Aging Society, the Center is measuring individuals' preferences for volunteer opportunities via an internet-based survey of county employees. Results of this survey will inform the subsequent design of programs aimed at increasing volunteerism in older adults. The project is in the data collection and analysis phase, with two preliminary survey waves already completed.

**Next Steps:** *Once survey data collection is complete, we will conduct data analysis, and communicate findings with the County of Santa Clara. Work will continue with the County to develop plans for implementing a volunteer recruitment effort to test the incentives identified.*



## MUSIC AND MEMORY PROJECT

With the help of a grant from the Shensen Trust, which supports the Music Department, and spurred by the 2010 Conference on “Longevity, Music and Memory”, the Center is continuing its research on music and memory. Postdoctoral Fellow Andy Reed, a member of Laura Carstensen’s lab, is heading up a study designed to investigate age differences in preferences, attention and memory for emotion-inducing music and sounds. The study is intended to fill gaps in our understanding of age differences related to positive versus negative sounds and music. Findings from this research will inform the acoustic design of older adult environments (e.g., senior living facilities and nursing homes) to optimize emotional benefits.



**Next Steps:** *The project will continue through academic year 12-13, culminating in a research report/paper.*

## **EVENTS & FORUMS**

**April 2012** - Humanizing Healthcare: Why Reform is So Essential

**February 2012** - “You’re Looking at Me Like I Live Here and I Don’t”

**February 2012** - The Developing Brain: Neuroscience from Womb to Death

## **LECTURES & TALKS**

*A Sampling of Professor Laura Carstensen’s Talks and Awards:*

### **A Long Bright Future**

Columbia School of Journalism, New York, NY

### **Honorary Doctorate in recognition of social and scientific research commitment in the field of aging**

Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, Belgium

### **Testimony at Senate Hearing on the Future of Our Aging Society**

Washington, DC

### **“Emotion and Aging”**

UCSF Mini Medical School, San Francisco, CA

### **“Living Longer and Better”**

Center for Vital Longevity, Dallas, TX

### **“Rebirth, Longevity & Aging”**

TEDx Event, New York, NY

### **“Long Life in the 21st Century”**

CASA Network (Christian Association Serving Adult Ministries: National Organization for Church Workers),  
Anaheim, CA

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

Future topics in the Mind Division include:

*Intergenerational issues - how can interactions between generations can be enhanced, supported and nurtured?*

*Decision-making about end of life issues – how can families be assisted with communication, decisions and planning?*