Postdoc Scholar Position for PASS Research Team

The University of Southern California’s Pullias Center for Higher Education is seeking to add a postdoctoral scholar to our Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS) research team to work on a longitudinal mixed methods evaluation study that examines how at-promise students (i.e. here, low-income students, many of whom are first-generation and racially minoritized) experience various forms of support during college. The overarching aims of the study are to (1) better understand how at-promise students’ psychosocial and academic outcomes change over time and relate to their experiences on campus; and, (2) examine programmatic and institutional change processes in support of at-promise student success. The position will be based at USC but the study itself focuses on three University of Nebraska campuses. The postdoctoral position will involve supporting and documenting the progress of three Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) comprised of university administrators, staff, and faculty from academic and student affairs. The position may also involve collecting and analyzing student-level data.

The postdoctoral scholar will collaborate closely with qualitative and quantitative researchers from the PASS team along with campus stakeholders at the University of Nebraska. We are particularly interested in applications from candidates with expertise in advanced qualitative methods, organizational change and learning, success factors and transition factors for at-promise students, educational interventions, and/or professional learning communities. This project is a follow up study to the Pullias Center’s PASS1 study that focused on the Thompson Scholars Learning Community; more can be found on our website.

Project activities will involve qualitative data collection and analysis, mixed methods collaboration, regularly attending planning and project meetings, travel to Nebraska several times a year, and writing up/disseminating findings for practitioner and research audiences. The study is designed with an actionable research approach that includes working closely with campus change agents and addressing issues of inequity in order to promote at-promise student success.

Ideal candidates will:

- Be adept at conducting rigorous, high quality and meaningful research with a particular emphasis on advanced qualitative data collection and analysis –including observation and interviewing skills;
● Have project management experience and a track record of collaborating with research team members across multiple sites and from diverse personal and disciplinary backgrounds;
● Have excellent interpersonal skills in order to foster relationships with a wide range of stakeholders (e.g. practitioners, administrators, faculty) across three campuses;
● Have knowledge about professional learning communities or similar postsecondary learning/change spaces;
● Have a track record of publishing academic articles; and
● Excel at translating research findings into materials useful for practitioner audiences including policy briefs, web-based resources and practitioner-oriented reports.

The mission of the Pullias Center for Higher Education is to bring a multidisciplinary perspective to complex social, political, and economic issues in higher education. Our work is devoted to the key issues of college access, retention, and accountability for underserved students—and the effectiveness of the colleges and universities that serve them. Both directly and through our research, we engage with institutional leaders, policymakers and the community at large to address major challenges in educational equity today. We seek individuals who are not only interested in conducting rigorous research but also intent on having their research translated in a way that enables multiple constituencies (e.g. policy-makers, administrators and teachers, parents and students) to make use of research findings.

The postdoctoral position will begin in August of 2022. It is a temporary, fixed-term, one-year position with the potential for reappointment for up to two additional years. The candidate should have earned a doctorate by the time of employment. The candidate will have active mentoring opportunities from faculty involved with the study as well as opportunities to attend workshops and conferences. Applicants should include a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, one sample publication, and contact information for three references.

Please address the following questions when submitting your letter of interest:

1. What is your research agenda?
2. How does your research tie into the mission of the PASS Project?
3. How will your expertise in project management, working with PLCs, and/or collaborating with a large team enhance the project?
4. How will this position further your research and career goals?
The University of Southern California strongly values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity in employment. Women and men, and members of all racial and ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply. Salary and benefits are competitive.

Please send materials to: Christine Rocha, Project Specialist, rochac@usc.edu