This year the University of Notre Dame was awarded a $5 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to launch a project called the Science of Generosity. The principal Investigator, Christian Smith, said, “The goal is to mobilize top-quality research across various disciplines on the origins, expressions and effects of generosity.”

The grant is one of the largest ever received by a faculty member in Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters. Notre Dame is supporting the project with additional resources of approximately $200,000.

The project defines generosity as the spirit and practice of giving good things to others freely and abundantly.


In addition to funding academic research at the University, the Science of Generosity initiative is hosting a competition among international scholars in fields such as sociology, economics, psychology, behavioral economics, education, law and religious studies.

The first phase of the competition will award $250,000 to $500,000 to four to eight of the most promising research proposals. The second phase will fund a number of smaller awards, totaling to $1.2 million.

Current academic studies on generosity are a scattered constellation of research projects operating under different terms such as philanthropy, giving, charity and altruism, Smith noted, but he anticipates a more unified field will develop around the Notre Dame initiative.

John McGreevy, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, said, “Research projects such as this that investigate broad moral questions and the common good are integral to Notre Dame’s academic mission. Just as important,” he commented, “Professor Smith’s work will bring scholars across the country and from many disciplines into conversation on a topic of fundamental importance.”

Additional information can be found online at: generosityresearch.nd.edu.
**Graduate Activities**

**American Sociological Association Conference Presentations:**

**Kari Christoffersen:** "The time has come to set aside childish things": Presidential Addresses and the Changing Face of Citizenship

**Meredith Whitnah:** "Authority and Anglicanism: A Weberian Perspective on a Contemporary Debate"

**Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Presentations:**

**Peter Mundey:** "The Prosperity Gospel and the Spirit of Capitalism According to Joel Osteen"

*Brandon Vaidyanathan:* "Religious Decline, Persistence and Reform among Call Centre Workers in India"

**Publications:**

**Patricia Snell:** "What Difference Does Youth Group Make?: A Longitudinal Analysis of Religious Youth Group Participation and Religious and Life Outcomes" in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*

**Faculty Profiles**

**Kraig Beyerlein** spent the last three years at the University of Arizona after receiving his Ph.D. in 2006 from the Sociology Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Kraig teaches and works in the areas of collective behavior, social movements, civic engagement, volunteering, and sociology of religion, especially congregation-based studies. He has published articles on these topics in such journals as *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Mobilization, Social Forces, and Social Problems*.

**Springs** joined the CSRS in fall 2008. He earned his Ph.D. in Religion and Society from Harvard University’s Committee on the Study of Religion (2005).


**Atalia Omer** earned her Ph.D. (2008) from the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University.

Atalia’s research has focused primarily on a systematic study of the dynamics of ethno-national conflicts, political and social theory, the theoretical study of religion and society, and the theoretical study of the interrelation between religion, nationalism, and questions of justice, peace, and conflict. She is currently working on a book manuscript titled *After Peace: How does the Israeli Peace Camp think about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice?*

**Introducing Dan Hubert**

Dan Hubert joined the center full-time this year as the RFP Manager for the Science of Generosity project. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of California, Davis and M.S./Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University. Dan was previously on faculty at Utah State University and the University of Texas Health Center in Tyler. He and his wife Lynn, a regional fundraiser for the University, have three young children.
RESEARCH SPOTLIGHTS

David Sikkink is directing the Cardus Education Study, a $650,000 study investigating the alignment between motivations and outcomes for Christian education, focusing particularly on academic, spiritual and cultural outcomes.

The main goal of the project is a survey that will be conducted with a representative sampling of alumni, teachers and administrators from 350 religious schools and home schools.

Graduate students Clint Elison, Elizabeth Kopko, Rich Majerus, and Brad Vermulen are assisting with the project.

It is expected that the survey will be ready for online completion at the end of September.

Mary Ellen Konieczny launched a new project this summer with the purpose of understanding how religious leaders’ and congregants’ views of domestic violence are related to their religious faith and congregational contexts.

The study includes interviews and participant-observation of Christian churches that vary according to race, socioeconomic status and theological tradition. With the assistance of graduate students Meredith Whitnah and Daniel Escher, Mary Ellen is exploring perceptions and understandings of domestic violence to understand better how men and women perceive and resolve situations of conflict with intimate partners and their children, and to look at the relation of faith to these understandings and behaviors.

Atalia Omer is working on a book manuscript titled After Peace: how does the Israeli Peace Camp think about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice?

Christian Smith and Patricia Snell published a book on the religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults, based on the third wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion (youthandreligion.org).

NICS: A team of Center for the Study of Religion and Society faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students finished data collection for the Northern Indiana Congregations Study, a five stage, mixed-methods project with dual foci in youth group programming and congregational giving and involvement.

In 2008 and 2009, the team conducted participant observations at four Christian denominations, observing worship services, youth activities and other congregational meetings throughout the year. A total of 229 discrete events were recorded in 724 pages of field notes.

The final stage consisted of additional in-person interviews (n=233) with a response rate of 87.6. A stratified quota sample of youth were interviewed as well as their parents. Members of the congregation were also sampled and interviewed based on levels of giving and church involvement.

The project has resulted in a total of 18 papers which are in publication, under review or in progress.

STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Josh Cook
Kaitlyn Conway
Emily Difilippo
Carmen Fitzsimmons
Caroline Hudson
Jennifer Jesse
Molly Kiernan
Molly Kring
Scott Mitchell
Marie Sanchez
Michelle Saucedo
Meredith Rowland
Jessica Technow
Allison VanderBroek
Katie Weber
Robert Wedow

GRADUATE AWARD

Robert Brenneman (left) won the first William V. D’Antonio (middle) award for Graduate Student Excellence in the Sociology of Religion at the University of Notre Dame, awarded by Christian Smith (right).

William D’Antonio joined the faculty of the University of Notre Dame as Assistant Professor, where he worked until 1971. He served as Professor and Chair of the Department at Notre Dame from 1966-1971.

‘08 Correction: Interviews for the overseas funding project were conducted by Stephen Armet, not Elizabeth Martinez.
INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKSHOP
ON AMERICAN RELIGION (IWAR)

The CSRS’s IWAR hosts a number of meetings with University of Notre Dame students and faculty from a variety of disciplines including sociology, history, and political science, to discuss topics of intersection within the study of religion.

Last year’s IWAR speakers include Stephen Warner of the University of Illinois at Chicago, John Green of the University of Akron, and Brian Steensland of Indiana University.

2009 IWAR speakers:

September 17: Robert Numan of the University of Colorado Boulder, 119 O’Shaughnessy

October 30: Donna Freitas of Boston University, 319 Hammes/Mowbray

November 20: Keith Meador of Duke University, 319 Hammes/Mowbray

UNDERGRADUATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Scott Mitchell, a junior, co-authored a paper with Patricia Snell entitled “The Future of Church Finances: Intergenerational Transmission of Protestant Religious Financial Giving,” which is currently under review for publication.

Juniors Kaitlyn Conway and Robbee Wedow received grants totaling more than $1,000 from the University of Notre Dame for travel and conference expenses to attend the 2009 meeting of the American Sociological Association in San Francisco with CSRS graduate students and faculty.

Junior Robbee Wedow was accepted to present a paper at the 2009 conference for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

For upcoming CSRS events, visit: csrs.nd.edu/events