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## Honors Research Assistant Program

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**Title:** Social Responsibility and Entrepreneurship

**Description of the Research:** Individuals and groups acting together in order to change society through collective action constitute social movements. Social movements, such as the green movement, the social justice movement, and the civil rights movement, have profound impact on businesses. Not only are business activities altered by social movements, but new markets and industries are created, as social movements and entrepreneurs interact. For example, the emergence of the ecotourism, alternative energy, and microfinance industries have been greatly influenced by social movements. We seek to understand how social movements create opportunities for entrepreneurs, new markets, and new industries.

In order to understand how social movements help to create new industries and markets, we seek to gather large quantities of data in very interesting contexts. For example, the environmental movement has played a key role in influencing the direction of research in bio-based industries, such as the rapidly-growing bioplastics industry. The environmental and social justice movements have influenced the creation of a new carbon credit market in which companies throughout the world can trade emissions to meet regulatory requirements.

**Responsibilities of the Student:**

1. Contribute ideas in how to understand the new market or industry is influenced by particular social movements.
2. Gather data on the actions of social movement in particular geographic regions. This might include documenting data found in online newspapers, government regulation public comment records, and blogs.
3. Gather data on the companies that operate in the emerging market or industry. This might include searching through industry association publications, industry certification systems, and government registration documents.
4. Help contact local companies to participate in the study.
5. Identify particularly insightful cases for class-room case studies.

**Approximate Number of Hours/Schedule:**

This is an on-going research project that is building a richer knowledge of this phenomenon. The work-plan is for one research assistant to start as soon as possible, for up to 10 hours per week for the remainder of the academic year. The student is free to set the hours that are most convenient for him/her.

**Qualifications:**

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1. Interest in entrepreneurship and social problems.
2. Ability to effectively and efficiently use online databases to gather data on company characteristics and social movement actions.
3. Strong organizational and planning skills to ensure data integrity.
4. Familiarity with Microsoft Access and/or Excel.
5. Some understanding of programming to run web-based spiders to gather data from online websites, rather than manually downloading data, is desirable.