



Honors Research Assistant Program

Title: Assisting in the Performance Evaluation and Oversight of Minnesota Public Pension Funds

Description of the Research: Long-standing evidence shows that most pension funds fail to capture the investment returns made available by their own investment policies. Recent investment shortfalls have further exposed the magnitude of the problem, leading to calls for larger contributions by taxpayers to offset losses. The Minnesota Taxpayers Association is preparing presentations to the legislature that will include results from this study to report on the performance of Minnesota's public pension funds. A top-down approach will be taken to delineate the primary groups of active decision-makers and determine how much value has been added or lost by each of them, from policy makers to portfolio managers.

Responsibilities of the Student: This study will have the student organize data collected from pension fund files, upload it into an online program to analyze the data and create reports. The student will learn how institutional investment funds are managed, and will assist in evaluating the investment results. The student will be encouraged to suggest ways of improving the analytical process.

Mike Stolte, working with the Minnesota Taxpayers Association, will direct most of the work. Progress will periodically be discussed with Tom Legg, the Faculty advisor.

Approximate Number of Hours/Schedule: The student can expect to average about eight hours of research and analysis work each week for ten weeks. The work schedule will be flexible.

Qualifications: Student will need above average Excel spreadsheet and database management skills. Course work in accounting and finance is expected.