Maedbh King
· PMF Finalist 2022 and PhD Candidate ·
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Department of Agriculture, Forest Service   *January 23, 2022*

1400 Independence Ave.
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Application for Social Scientist

To whom it may concern,

About Me

I'm currently finishing my Ph.D. in psychology (cognitive neuroscience) at the University of California, Berkeley. I have 6+ years of hypothesis- and data-driven research experience in the social sciences. In my work, I apply machine learning and statistics to large and complex databases to build models of brain function, in an effort to understand cognitive processes like learning and memory. I have a strong track record of publishing in high-impact, peer-reviewed scientific journals (>350 citations), presenting at research conferences (>10 proceedings), and making science accessible (>200 downloads of open-access datasets and code). I am passionate about teaching and mentoring, and I have experience working with diverse groups of students, from undergraduates at UC Berkeley, to incarcerated students at San Quentin State Prison. Furthermore, my research interests dovetail strongly with science and technology policy, and over the past 5 years, I have used data-driven solutions to promote issues concerning equity, transparency, and accountability within academia and non-profit organizations. While much of my time is dedicated to scientific pursuits, the remainder of my time is spent exploring the mountains and forests, and cycling along highway 1.

Why Forest Service?

As a social scientist, I am keen to use my scientific training, particularly my computational and communication expertise, to work on innovative projects that work to preserve and promote US national forests from Tahoe to Monongahela. A social scientist position within the Forest Service perfectly marries my scientific research expertise with my passion for the preservation and promotion of our nation's most magnificent lands. In addition, the PMF program at the Forest Service offers a unique opportunity for professional development training, and I am very eager to hone my leadership skills and expertise through meaningful work assignments. Most importantly, I am excited at the prospect of working in a rapidly adapting position, alongside colleagues who, as well as being innovative thinkers, are creative, thoughtful, and driven.

Why Me?

I have gained a lot of technical expertise during my Ph.D. with a particular focus on data science techniques and advanced statistics. However, as every scientist knows, non-technical skills are integral to successful research, from developing efficient communication strategies for managing cross-functional projects, to establishing norms and guidelines for collaborative decision-making, and I believe that I can use these skills to coordinate and lead RHVR program managers in addressing a slate of interrelated efforts. Furthermore, my previous work has been fast-paced and has required a high level of adaptability and critical thinking, from grant writing and editorial duties, to high-level project planning and coordination of goals across interdisciplinary teams. Thus, I believe that I have the skills necessary to work as a social scientist in the Forest Service, from coordinating and supporting the broader goals of climate and equity policies, to providing management support in coordinating agency responses. On a more personal note, living in California, the crushing realities of the climate crisis are never far from my mind, and after 6+ years of basic science research, I am keen to translate my skills and knowledge into real-world outcomes.

Sincerely,

Maedbh King