Call for Knight Fellow Proposals

We invite proposals for seed grants to support graduate students working on issues related to the mission of the Center for Informed Democracy and Social-cybersecurity (IDeaS):

To advance science in the area of social-cybersecurity with the aim of fostering a more informed democracy. Social-cybersecurity is the science to characterize, understand, and forecast **cyber-mediated** changes in human behavior, social, cultural and political outcomes, *and* the engineering to build the cyber-infrastructure needed for **society** to persist in its essential character in a **cyber-mediated** information environment under changing conditions, actual or imminent social cyber-threats. Of particular interest is transdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary research that addresses an issue related to the spread of disinformation, hate-speech, or undue influence through the cyber-mediated media.

We are particularly interested in proposals that address one (or more) of the six key research themes at IDeaS:

1. ***Social Cyber-Forensics*** - Who is acting & reacting? Who is spreading disinformation or hate-speech and who is being targeted?
2. ***Information Threats and Challenges*** - How are individuals or groups attacked or threatened on-line? How can we best characterize an information manipulation campaign? What is the impact of these threats?
3. ***Intent Identification*** - Why is the controversial information being spread? Why are certain individuals or groups targeted?
4. ***Indicators and Warnings*** - What are the early indicators that there is an ongoing influence campaign, or disinformation maneuver, or an attempt to spread hate?
5. ***Inoculation*** - How can people and groups protect themselves? How can inauthentic behavior be spotted or avoided?
6. ***Countering*** - How can influence or disinformation or hate-speech campaigns be countered? What responses are most effective in creating resilience? How can you tell if a counter-maneuver is successful?

Ph.D. students funded through these grants will become Knight Fellows in the IDeaS center, including additional opportunities for learning and collaborating. This funding can be used to:

1) Start new research with the anticipation that this will lead to a proposal (by the student or advisor) to a government or industrial sponsor in this area.
2) Extend their dissertation to include work on social-cybersecurity.
3) Conduct a transdisciplinary project with a student and faculty member from another department that would not otherwise happen.

What will be funded:
• A single summer or semester of stipend for the Ph.D. student.
• Free entry for student & advisor to the IDeaS Summer Institute and summer conference (including designated networking opportunities).

What will not be funded:
• Faculty salary
• Student stipend while the student is on an unpaid internship
• Purchasing social media data
• Travel
• Equipment

Requirements
• The research must be in one of the core research areas of the center.
• The student must present the results of the work during the poster sessions at the summer institute and conference.
• The home department is expected to cost-share student tuition for one semester, and 1 week of the advisor's time. Funds from other sponsors may be used in the cost share.

Details on format:
• Proposal should outline the proposed research, including its relation to the mission and key research themes of IDeaS, with a particular emphasis on research elements that would not otherwise be performed without this funding
• Maximum of 3 pages including all references, images, and tables.
• Times Roman 11 or 12; Calibri 11 or 12, or equivalent sized font.
• Proposals should be submitted as PDFs.
• The proposal should list the name of the faculty advisor or advisors, the home department, the student's name, and the year they started the Ph.D. program at CMU.
• Proposals must be submitted by email to kathleen.carley@cs.cmu.edu by June 30, 2021