Princeton students are part of a new global health generation — a generation that witnesses first-hand the severe health inequalities in the world and wants to do something about it. Administered by the Center for Health and Wellbeing as part of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, the Global Health Program (GHP) equips students with the cutting-edge tools, real-life experiences and critical perspectives to make meaningful change in a time plagued by both emerging and enduring health-related challenges. Drawing upon Princeton’s unparalleled strengths in the social and natural sciences, public policy, engineering, and the humanities, we take our students to the front lines of global health.

One of the GHP’s defining and most popular elements is its focus on hands-on learning: all students in the certificate program are required to complete a field- or laboratory-based research experience in the summer between junior and senior year.
Most GHP students connect their summer work to their senior thesis research. Our students thrive as they work with affected communities, health practitioners and researchers both abroad and in the United States.

The Global Health Program was created in 2008 with 19 juniors and the number of enrolled students has nearly quadrupled over the years. To date, the Global Health Program has graduated 286 students from more than 20 departments. With 114 students, GHP is currently one of the three largest certificate programs at Princeton. Concomitant to this impressive growth, the Global Health Program has also become a reference across campus for innovatively connecting internationalization to interdisciplinary research and teaching, and for integrating experiential learning and service in mutually supportive and illuminating ways.¹

This proposal seeks support from the International Fund (IF) to sustain a very successful research and teaching initiative that the Global Health Program (GHP) has developed in conjunction with the Department of Preventive Medicine, the School of Public Health, and the Department of Anthropology at the University of São Paulo (USP). With funding from Princeton’s Council for International Teaching and Research, Professor João Biehl coordinated this first pilot project of the broader Princeton-USP strategic partnership. Carried out during 2012-2016, this pioneering initiative brought together faculty and undergraduate and graduate students from Princeton and USP,

fostering collaborative research and seminars and cultivating pedagogical initiatives around global health, health policy, and the anthropology of health and medicine.

The Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program, for which we are seeking three-year funding, is the most prominent outcome of this pilot initiative and has become a hallmark of Princeton’s Global Health Program. It has been developed by GHP in conjunction with the Woodrow Wilson School’s Center for Health and Wellbeing and the Department of Anthropology. Our partners at the University of São Paulo provide unique opportunities for Princeton students to participate in social science and basic science research and to become involved in its application to policy making and care delivery in an international public health context. Because GHP serves a population of students beyond those pursuing its certificate, The Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program is open to all interested students. Juniors have the opportunity to develop independent projects and to intern and research in various public health ventures, including a comprehensive public health care clinic run by the interdisciplinary team of USP’s Department of Preventive Medicine and which serves over fifty thousand low-income people. The Program’s broad research areas are: Primary Health Care, Adolescent Health, Mental Health, Environmental Health, Medical Humanities, Urban Studies, Human Rights, and Public Health History.

After being accepted in the Program, Fellows meet regularly with GHP faculty and postdocs. They also have the opportunity to meet with visiting USP faculty here on Princeton’s campus to lay the foundations for their summer research project. Once in Brazil, the Fellows partner with research mentors on the ground, who act as critical
contacts and collaborators during their eight-week summer research/internship. Fellows also have the opportunity to participate in a two-week international summer course at USP’s School of Medicine, which brings together a large cohort of international medical students to take courses in fields ranging from Neglected Tropical Diseases to Anesthesiology and Endocrinology to Preventive Medicine. The Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program affirms intergenerational and cross-cultural exchanges and mentoring: it also supports social science graduate students seeking to conduct preliminary dissertation research in Brazil and integrates Brazilian graduate students from USP and other partner institutions into the Program’s activities on campus.

Princeton students selected as Fellows benefit greatly from the combination of access to health care facilities and datasets, direct exposure to the intricacies of health-related research, and intensive research mentorship. Throughout the summer in São Paulo, undergraduates and graduate students regularly participate in workshops to debrief and discuss work-in-progress with USP colleagues and a GHP faculty or postdoc. Professor José Ricardo de Carvalho Mesquita Ayres and his colleagues at USP’s Department of Preventive Medicine are the Program’s major partner in São Paulo and greatly help to facilitate individual student internships and research projects and organize group workshops. Professors Helena Ribeiro and Lilia M. Schwarcz and their colleagues in the Departments of Environmental Health and of Anthropology also play a key role in the Fellows’ mentoring and networking. This collaborative dynamic is maintained as each year, faculty and graduate students from USP have the opportunity to visit Princeton to participate in the GHP program through coursework, research and
symposia; this allows for sustained dialogue and builds bridges between research
development, fieldwork, coursework, and critical reflection and senior thesis writing
back at Princeton.

The Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program is not simply a demonstrated proof
of concept: it has been transformational for all parties involved and is a testament to the
unique ways in which Princeton’s international mission combines research, teaching, and
service. In the words of USP Professor José Ricardo de Carvalho Mesquita Ayres, “This
exchange program has been transformative. Princeton Fellows learn first-hand about the
challenges of delivering quality primary care and high-tech medicine in a universal
health system. Their direct contact with health practitioners and advocates, as well as
with poor patients and their families, profoundly impacts how they view the art of
caregiving. The Fellows have been a stimulating and enriching presence for all of us.”

During 2012 and 2016, seventeen undergraduate students participated in the
Princeton Brazil Global Fellows program. They were majoring in the Departments of
Anthropology, Molecular Biology, Sociology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology,
Psychology, Civil and Environmental Engineering, History of Science, Spanish and
Portuguese, English, and in the Woodrow Wilson School—twelve of them were pursuing
a GHP certificate. Student research topics were highly diverse, including the following:
medicalization and the challenges of comprehensive health care; transgender health; the
rise of C-sections and the rehumanizing of birth practices; Bolivian immigrants and their
health-seeking behavior; insecticide resistance of malaria vectors; medical and nursing
training in the Global South. We selected seven graduate Fellows during this period; their
research activities included topics such as disability, nutrition, environmental activism, and substance abuse prevention. See Appendix 1 for a list of undergraduate Fellows and their senior thesis projects (as well as honors) and Appendix 2 list of graduate students and their dissertation research projects.

Student evaluations of the Princeton-Brazil Program have been extremely positive. Among the highlights they cite are: the close mentoring in Princeton and Brazil; the facilitated access to public health clinics and scientific datasets; the benefits of hands-on and collaborative and service-related learning; the cultivation of empathy, cultural sensibility, critical thinking, and linguistic skills in international context; and the making of more exciting and rigorous senior theses. Students also speak highly of the debriefing workshops and academic seminars the Program organized and that enabled students to reflect on their field experiences upon return to Princeton, thus turning a single-summer experience into a robust and extended pedagogical process, building on and reinforcing a combination of practical and classroom learning over time.

A critical factor in the success of the Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program has been the strong and reciprocal partnership with our Brazilian colleagues and the institutions where our students conduct research. By establishing a substantial logistical support system and by fostering a vibrant and multilayered scholarly community, connecting members of each university from across generations for sustained collegial exchange and academic networking, the Program has itself played an important role in the consolidation of the Princeton-USP partnership. The continued strength of this institutional relationship allows for regular exchanges, increases confidence that our
students will engage in high-quality and high-impact research, expands opportunities for faculty and postdoctoral fellows to conduct collaborative projects, and streamlines administration of internship and research opportunities.

It would be a tremendous loss for our student body and for Princeton’s internationalization efforts to have this groundbreaking Program cease and vanish. Without any other source of funding immediately available, we humbly and hopefully request fifty thousand dollars per year (for a three-year period) from the International Fund to keep the Princeton Brazil Global Fellows Program flourishing. The funds requested will be used for undergraduate and graduate student fellowships in São Paulo (travel/visa/accommodation/meals); short-term trips of Princeton faculty and postdoctoral fellows to Brazil; short-term visits to campus of USP faculty to plan and discuss research and to guest lecture in GHP courses; fees for Brazilian Visiting Student Research Collaborators; administrative and research assistance; and small workshops bringing together faculty and students involved in the Princeton-Brazil Global Fellows Program.

Many thanks for your consideration and continuous support!