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Gender Bias in the Production and Targets of Critical Questions at Academic Conferences

Summary:

Our research focuses on the biases that affect how academics interpret the research of women compared to that of men, and how such biases might present challenges to women in disseminating the results of their research. Specifically, we intend to determine whether female presenters receive more critical questions and comments following their presentations at academic conferences. This can be shown if men ask more critical questions to female presenters than to male presenters, and if they ask more critical questions to female presenters than do female audience members, but the same is not true for male presenters. Conference attendance is often integral to academics' professional development—conferences present unique opportunities to receive feedback on recent research, learn of others' groundbreaking work, and forge collaborations. We believe this research will provide a much clearer picture of possible challenges that disproportionately affect women at such venues. Insights from this research can inform how we approach research evaluation, both on an individual and institutional level. For instance, evidence of substantial bias might suggest the need to better train moderators or session chairs at conferences, to mask the gender of authors during peer-review of papers, and ensure greater gender balance on review panels.



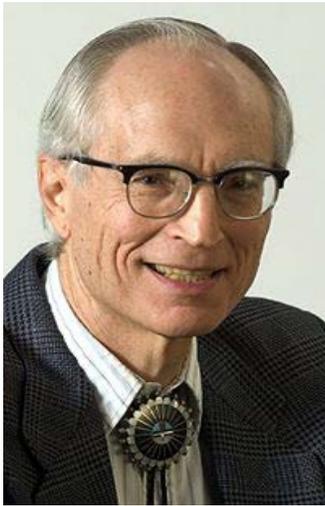
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Dr. Sharon Gursky, Faculty Sponsor

Teaching Diversity Matters in Anthropology Classroom: Impact for TAMU and Beyond

Summary:

This project seeks to improve instruction about race and ethnicity in undergraduate classrooms. “Patterns and Efficacy in Teaching Concepts of Race in Anthropology” (PETCRA) is a study that assessed how the concept of race was being taught in undergraduate anthropology classrooms at Texas A&M, and how well students adopted more anthropological viewpoints with different pedagogical tools. We plan to disseminate our study at a national conference on race and ethnicity in education and prepare a manuscript for a high-impact, higher education journal that incorporates literature outside of anthropology. In addition, we aim to apply our findings to our classrooms at Texas A&M. Using the findings of our study, and other academic research into higher education diversity pedagogy, we will develop lesson plans, activities, and assessments to teach about race and ethnicity, specially designed for the needs of TAMU students. We will design these materials to be incorporated in our largest undergraduate course, ANTH205: Peoples and Cultures of the World. We will assess the efficacy of these pedagogical tools using the PETCRA methodology. With these goals, we aim to advance the Diversity Plan of Texas A&M University through re-enforcing a campus climate that understands that “...the inclusion of participants with diverse identities is essential to excellence”. Though the effective instruction on the scientific and anthropological understanding of race and ethnicity, we aim to improve student learning and the campus climate in general.



Dr. Joe Feagin
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Melissa Ochoa Garza
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Observations & Experiences of Sexism

Summary:

Sexism, or the discrimination based on sex, is prevalent and institutionalized in our culture, including the media, and in our interactions. The expectations we have for ourselves and of others are framed by our understanding of societal gender roles, which are what defines “women” and “men.” Our qualitative research project addresses three broad questions: 1) How is sexism experienced and witnessed regularly among both men and women, and how does it vary by racial group? 2) What are the subtle and blatant forms of sexism that are exchanged in daily interactions? 3) In what social contexts do these subtle and blatant forms of sexism occur and who embraces, perpetuates, and contributes to these types of sexism? Examining institutionalized sexism from our deeper sociological perspective will help fill in the gaps within the current sexism literature in social science. We are conducting a journal study in which a diverse group of undergraduate students write any everyday interactions they perceive to be examples of sexism. We expect to find both blatant and more nuanced forms of sexism embraced and perpetuated by both men and women in various social contexts. Based on findings from a pretest conducted with undergraduate students from a southern university, we expect that many everyday interactions will show that blatant and subtle forms of sexism are not only normative experiences, many especially for women, but also that the individual and collective acceptance of these oppressive everyday experiences helps to sustain the systemic sexism fundamental to this society.



Alexandra Schuur Sousa
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Dr. J. Kevin Barge, Faculty Sponsor

Faculty Mentoring Programs: Unfit for Diversity

Summary:

Existing research on faculty mentoring points to several shortcomings for female faculty of color. Mentoring practices in higher education have become standardized and as a result, have become unfitting for the experiences of diverse faculty members. Unfortunately, these faculty members are also those that face more barriers in their job positions and can benefit from mentoring the most. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate faculty mentoring programs at Texas A&M through the experiences of female faculty of color, in hopes of uncovering pitfalls in current faculty mentoring practices and ways to improve them. A pilot study, using in-depth interviews as a method, was conducted in Summer 2016. Preliminary interviews with female faculty of color disclosed both positive and negative experiences with faculty mentoring at A&M. Participants outlined pitfalls of current mentoring practices and offered suggestions of how they can be more fitting for diverse faculty members. Interviews revealed many complexities about faculty mentoring that cannot be answered within existing literature and deserve more exploration. Improving mentoring programs is not only beneficial to individual faculty members, but also universities as a whole, especially with diversity being increasingly positioned as a central value. Therefore, a full study with a larger sample is necessary to parse out the nuances associated with mentoring practices, and provide recommendations for how to improve this important faculty resource.



Dr. Srividya Ramasubramanian
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Vanessa Gonlin, Co-P.I.
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Assessing the Effectiveness of Difficult Dialogue Sessions on Campus Race Relations Using Participant-Observation and Qualitative Textual Analysis

Summary:

In early 2016, in response to a racist incident on campus, the College of Liberal Arts set up a series of sessions in conjunction with Aggie Agora to give undergraduate students the opportunity to reflect and respond to campus racism through facilitated small group discussions. The goals of these racial dialogues were to allow participants to challenge their preconceived notions, listen to multiple perspectives, create shared meaning, and lay the foundation for working collectively to counter racism. Over the last few months, these sessions have been offered multiple times in heterogeneous and homogenous group settings. The session design is tailored and adapted to fit the social identity and goals of the students, as well as other contextual factors. In this project, we will use the literature on dialogic models, communication as design theory, and social identity theory as the framework to reflect on the critical design elements and situational factors that shaped the effectiveness of these sessions in various contexts. We will disseminate our findings and share a model with diversity leaders at peer and aspirant universities, especially predominantly white institutions (PWIs), seeking to construct productive and engaging conversations about racism on their own campuses.



Dr. L. Quentin Dixon
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Incorporating World Englishes Through Consciousness-Raising Activities into a Teacher Education Program

Summary:

Despite the global spread of English, the voices from English language teachers concerning World Englishes (WE) are under-represented. Studying how WE are understood and received by native and non-native English-speaking teachers is crucial, considering that English language teachers are at the forefront of many pedagogical changes. In second language education, a continuous diversification of English has redirected the main goal in English language teaching toward the comprehension and use of more varieties of English. Global English is, by definition, primarily concerned with “functional flexibility” across many different linguistic, geographical, and cultural areas, as well as “its openness to foreign norms” (House, 2012, p. 187). Despite the prominent status of English as an international language (EIL) and its recognition by researchers, it seems that few studies have been done to promote an EIL-oriented teaching, encourage an awareness of the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in English today, and help the predominantly young pre-service English language teachers develop diversity awareness. To bridge this gap, the present study is an attempt to reflect on how undergraduate pre-service English language teachers recognize the validity of different emerging varieties of English. This study also seeks to explore the nature and types of consciousness-raising activities which foster the awareness of teachers of the linguistic diversity of present-day English use. Accordingly, this teacher education program will be devoted to the issues of overcoming adversity and stereotypes, as well as promoting equity for non-native users of English who speak non-native and/or non-“standard” varieties of English. The findings contribute to reappraisal of English language teaching practices and the premises underpinning teaching WE.



Christine L. Kaunas
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A Click Away: Improving Diversity and Inclusion Communications at the Health Science Center

Summary:

An institution of higher education's website is its "virtual face" to the world. Language, images, and design can convey a multitude of messages, both explicit and implicit, about the values of the institution and the people that belong there. Further, what is seen or stated is just as important as what is not visible or goes unsaid. When it comes to diversity and inclusion, what is communicated is particularly critical given efforts to support all student, staff, and faculty groups as well as attract those outside the institution. However, efforts to communicate values of diversity and inclusion often fall short. Research has illustrated the lack of attention to full inclusion of underrepresented groups on websites at institutions of higher education. This project aims to address the discrepancy between what we value and what we *show* we value at the Texas A&M University Health Science Center (HSC) by *analyzing website content related to diversity and inclusion and taking action to remediate problems identified*. In addition to images and text, the HSC aims to examine their websites for the presence of the following diversity and inclusion indicators: diversity links on the front page; a contact person related to diversity; a designated webpage for diversity efforts; student/staff/faculty affinity groups; diversity and inclusion mentioned in vision/values/mission statements and strategic plans; a diversity statement; a diversity plan (or link to the University Diversity Plan); a diversity committee; and number of clicks from the front page to diversity content. The reach of this project is broad. Not only will current students, staff, and faculty be impacted by this project, but other critical audiences will be affected as well. Potential students, staff, and faculty, accreditors, parents, donors, research collaborators, funders, and grant reviewers will see an improved website that is more congruent with the HSC's stated values of diversity and inclusion.



Dr. Jia Wang
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Dr. Dae Seok Chai, Co-P.I.
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Cross-cultural Adjustment and Engagement: Perceptions and Experiences of International Students in U.S. Higher Education

Summary:

Texas A&M University (TAMU) is a model institution in the U.S. for promoting diversity and equity. However, of the under-represented populations at TAMU, international students, have not received adequate attention or support although they account for more than 10% of the student body (6,600 enrolled in Fall 2016). This project is designed to understand this marginalized population at TAMU. Specifically, this research aims to investigate the relationships between multi-level resources international students receive in academic and personal domains, and their organizational citizenship behavior and psychological well-being. It also examines the mediating effects of cross-cultural adjustment and engagement on the relationships. Furthermore, this study examines the influence of international students' national cultures on these relationships. Research outcomes will not only fill in a knowledge gap but also influence policy making and promote changes that will lead to a more equitable educational environment and quality of life for international students. For university administrators, the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and International Student Services, findings from this research will shed light on the resources that will facilitate international students' cross-cultural adjustment and engagement, enabling them to create better support systems for this under-represented student population.



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Sin-Nang Cindy Liu, Co-I
Yimin He, Co-I

The Power of Social Climate Change: Studies of Chronic Ostracism Experiences in the TAMU Academic Community

Summary:

Jobs as ghost writer and silent partner imply that no negative consequences accompany being present but not accounted for in the workplace. However, research shows being an “invisible” worker matters. A previous longitudinal study conducted at Texas A&M University showed that faculty of color, compared to their majority group faculty peers, reported more experiences of isolation and less feelings of fit in their home departments or programs. The proposed project will extend the scope of the previous study and will employ quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to document the experiences of male and female, tenured/tenure-track Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latino faculty of color at this university. The project will contribute to the published literature on social inequities in the workplace and will have implications for retaining faculty of color.