

Chair's Corner: Dr. Toni Watt



Welcome, to the fall 2021 edition of the Department of Sociology newsletter, "The Promise". The goal of the newsletter is to keep you up-to-date on our department, and this year we have a lot of changes to tell you about. First, our esteemed chair of six years, Dr. Chad Smith is stepping down from his administrative position and returning to the general faculty. He is taking a sabbatical in the coming year to focus on his research. We are incredibly grateful for the many contributions Dr. Smith has made to the department. I assumed the role of department chair in the fall of 2021. While I have been a faculty member in the department for 20 years, I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the department in this new way. If you would like to read more about my background and work, [click here](#). Finally, Dr. Patti Giuffre, our phenomenal Director of Graduate Programs also left her position. She has a new role as Assistant Dean of the Graduate College. Fortunately, she will remain a faculty

member in the department. We want to congratulate Dr. Giuffre on her accomplishments and thank her for all she has done for our graduate students. Dr. David Dietrich has been appointed as the new Director of Graduate Programs. He has already hit the ground running and will no doubt be a tremendous asset to our department and students.

As you may know, Sociologists study society, with the aim of helping people better understand the social world and their place within it. Our students learn about many social issues, particularly social problems. However, we are not a passive profession. Students also learn how to engage with their communities to create innovative solutions for social problems. I am so proud of the students who choose this path and the faculty and staff who prepare them to be successful in these endeavors. In this newsletter you'll read about some of the ways that we engage in the world as Sociologists, from our new interdisciplinary minor in sustainability studies to the outstanding achievements of Sociology alumnus Dr. Christian Bolden. You'll also see just a sample of the many accomplishments and accolades our faculty members and students accrued this past year.

I don't have to tell you that this year was a difficult one. However, this fall we have a chance to start over; to reflect on, reset, and recommit to our goals. August Comte, the father of Sociology, believed that the purpose of Sociology is to make a better world. I couldn't agree more. This year I look forward to finding new ways to serve society through Sociology, and I am inspired by the people and ideas in this department. On behalf of the Department of Sociology, I want to thank you for your interest in our work. Please keep up with us through our Facebook page and Twitter account and don't hesitate to share your news with us.

Take care,
Toni Watt

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2020-2021 Department of Sociology Award Recipients

AWARDS

Outstanding Undergraduate in Sociology

Kyle Benacquisto

Grusendorf Award for the Outstanding Sociology Senior

Kyle Benacquisto

Outstanding Graduate Student in Sociology

Cindy Mays

Graduate Program Award for Outstanding Contribution

Cindy Mays

Fiona Burke

SCHOLARSHIPS

Clarence Schultz Scholarship

Kenzie Nasser

Shelby Renee Newman Memorial Scholarship

Solei Salazar

Charlotte McCord Scholarship

John House

Alejandra Ramos

Newsom/Matlock Scholarship

Sidni Martinez

Geoff Wood Memorial Scholarship

Marissa Carrizales

Graduate College Merit Fellowships

Mikaela Billington

Kayla Dudley

Alexandra Thompson

HONORS

Newsom Scholars

Jose Alejandro

Lyric Calvert

Lauren Chaffin

Caitlin Clifford-Guzman

Vivian Dang

Graciela DeLeon

Elizabeth Epperson

Emily Gibson

Collins Huff

Emily Mayhew

Zane Nesloney

Faith Norman

Raven Perez

Matthew Pursley

Morgan Smith

Anna Strickland

Liberal Arts Academic Achievement Certificates

Nikki Ondrus

Sofia Pinto

Eric Pulido-Ceja

Luis Ramirez Cano

Jose Silva

Leticia Strader

Aaron Sturk

David Barnett

Kyle Benacquisto

Mikaela Billington

Claire Boudrot

Cecilio Lopes Rosales

Sidni Martinez

Kenzie Nasser

Alpha Kappa Delta, International Honor Society of Sociology, 2020-2021 Inductees:

David Barnett

Mikaela Billington

Sam Cozy

Alejandro Ramirez Cano

Nancy Restaino Cox

Brend Fagan

Pamela Hanson

Robert Hawkins

Tameron Henry

Samantha Kaseberg

Geoicondar Morse

Kenzie Nasser

Nancy Schwab

Anna Strickland

Nathaniel Williams

2021 Faculty Honors and Awards

*Golden Apple Award
Presidential Distinction
Award: Service*



Professor Gayle Bouzard

*Texas State University System:
Regents Teacher*



Dr. Rachel Romero

College of Liberal Arts Achievement Awards

Teaching



Dr. Beatriz Aldana Marquez

Scholarly/Creative



Dr. Toni Watt

2021 Faculty Honors and Awards

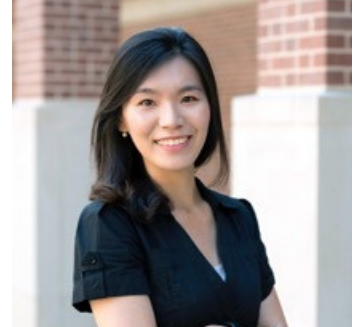
Tenure & Promotion: Associate Professor



Dr. Matthew Clement



Dr. Michelle Edwards



Dr. Seoyoun Kim

Faculty Service Awards

Ten Years



Dr. David Dietrich

Fifteen Years



Dr. Kyong Hee Chee



Dr. Nathan Pino

Twenty Years



Dr. Debarun Majumdar



Prof. Kelly Mosel-Talavera



Dr. Toni Watt

Faculty Spotlight: New Director of Graduate Programs Dr. David Dietrich



My name is David Dietrich, and I am the Director of Graduate Programs at Texas State University. I received my Ph.D. from Duke University in 2011 and joined the Sociology department at Texas State University that same year.

My areas of interest are racial and ethnic relations, social movements, social stratification, and sociological theory. I have published in journals such as *Critical Sociology*, *Sociological Inquiry*, and *Sociological Focus*.

In 2014 I published my first book, *Rebellious Conservatives: Social Movements in Defense of Privilege*, on contemporary conservative social movements in the United States. My ongoing research includes examinations of conservative social movements, racial representation in online gaming, and the continuing effects of the Donald Trump presidency.

Learn more about Dr. Dietrich [here!](#)

Sustainability Studies Minor



**Undergraduates:
Interested in
Sustainability?**



LOOK NO FURTHER
Starting Fall 2021,
Sustainability Studies an
interdisciplinary minor
will be offered through the
Department of Sociology.

ABOUT

The Minor in Sustainability Studies examines the human dimensions of the environment and sustainability in an interdisciplinary context.

Sustainability Studies Minor

For more information contact the Department of Sociology: sociology@txstate.edu, 512-245-2113. Please see [the course catalog](#) for information about the degree.

TEXAS STATE
SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

The minor requires 18 semester credit hours. Sustainability Studies examines the human dimensions of the environment and sustainability in an interdisciplinary context.

The program goals include providing students with an opportunity to explore the connections between social and physical systems, developing skills consistent with critical analysis and interdisciplinary knowledge for students who seek careers in sustainability, and a mechanism for students to learn about sustainability and to apply that knowledge to real-world problems.

Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Christian Bolden



Our department was proud to celebrate alumni, Dr. Christian Bolden (BS '03, MA '05), at the 2021 College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Alumni Achievement Awards

Dr. Christian Bolden earned his Bachelor of Science in Applied Sociology in 2003 and a Master's in Sociology in 2005 from Texas State University. He received his doctorate from the University of Central Florida in 2010. He is currently an Associate Professor and the Interim Chair in the Criminology and Justice Department at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Bolden recently served as Associate Director of University Honors and Graduate

Coordinator. He is an internationally known scholar of criminology with a focus on studies of gangs. He has a forthcoming book about gangs with Rutgers University Press entitled *Out of the Red: My Life of Gangs, Prison, and Redemptions*. He has received several awards and competitive grants and fellowships for his brave research, much of which involves interviews with gang members. He was invited by the FBI to be a guest speaker at Quantico after they learned about his research.

Dr. Bolden has experienced several difficult tragedies. As a resilient survivor, he made a promise to himself to help vulnerable students and community members. He dedicated himself to teaching all students about having compassion towards the groups that society often ignores, including those who are victims of trafficking and people who are on death row.

His academic career has been shaped by his commitment to social justice. Dr. Bolden's research, university and community service, and teaching support some of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Dr. Bolden has served as faculty supervisor for Students against Sexual Assault and the African and African American Studies Committee, among others. He has worked on several initiatives with non-profits in the New Orleans area. Currently, he is working with the Modern Slavery Project, which involves studying and supporting homeless youth, particularly those who are vulnerable to trafficking. Dr. Bolden supports and empowers students and members of the local community. He has worked with students to help communities in New Orleans rebuild after hurricanes. He takes his students to Angola, the Louisiana State prison, to observe the brutal conditions of prisoners' daily lives. His students have also testified in the Louisiana state court about abolishing the state's death penalty law.





Send us news!

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NEWS & EVENTS

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