

FALL 2016 ISSUE

42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association

**FORUM: The Voice of
The Mid-South
Sociological Association
North Charleston,
South Carolina**





FORUM: The Voice of The Mid-South Sociological

Introduction

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The purpose of Forum is to disseminate information, motivate participation, promote unity, and supplement records. This issue has information about the upcoming meeting in North Charleston, SC (October 12-15, 2016).

In the spirit of community building, I am currently seeking members willing to serve on an editorial board for Forum: Voice of the MidSouth. The board members would help not only disseminate important information and spread sociological insights but gain valuable opportunities for skill building. Please see the call for editorial board (page _____)

A special thanks to all those who, submitted, sent notices, gave interviews and generally supported the association and this publication.

Please consider submitting information, articles etc. and/or continue to do so! The next edition of Forum will feature interviews with members, and plenary speakers, highlights from meetings in North Charleston!

Please print, post and/or share and as always, send any and all submissions and suggestions to: Forum Editor Tina Deshotels

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:
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MSSA Forum:
The Voice of the Mid-South Sociological Association
Spring 2016

From the Desk of the President

42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association



Dr. Demond Miller

On Sociological Relevance and the MSSA

From the inception of the Mid-South Sociological Association in 1975, MSSA has remained dedicated to the highest level of excellence in teaching, service and scholarship. We continue to demonstrate these values in our commitment to our peers, students, and fellow scholars in and beyond our region. As an organization, we work closely with our regional, national, and international counterparts in other sociological scholarly societies to the general public with a better understanding of relevant social issues of our time. Over the years, our experiences have enabled us to learn and grow via on-going organizational reflection and necessary adjustments. We have learned to measure our value based on our ability to remain relevant in the scholarly and professional communities. The MSSA remain viable and relevant in two ways:

The MSSA serves as an outlet to help students and professionals hone essential skills and protocols such as writing, critical thinking, and effective communication critical for advancement of the discipline. The MSSA, through its publications and presentation venues, cultivates a deep knowledge of the sociological tradition needed to understand life in a rapidly changing world. This deep knowledge informs other disciplines of the social impact of their research and work.

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The MSSA continues this tradition of excellence and grow as an organization. To this end, the executive council has implemented a strategic planning exercise to help advance the MSSA into the future. We seek to frame and focus our intentions with the four broad key MSSA imperatives:

- Enhance the MSSA student experience
- Enrich our academic communities and beyond (via scholarship and teaching)
- Increase opportunities for research and service collaborations
- Build and strengthen our membership base

Together with Dr. Shirley Rainey-Brown, the executive council is pleased to work together to promote a “warm” and “inviting” scholarly environment conducive to promoting scholarly synergies, creative thinking, and cross-campus collaborations. Dr. Rainey-Brown’s enthusiasm and drive will help the MSSA’s 2016 Annual Meeting in North Charleston, South Carolina be one of our best. The annual meeting is one of the ways we strive to connect members beyond the work of standing committees, scholarly publishing in *Sociological Spectrum* and the MSSA’s two Research Networks (Disasters and Gender and Sexualities) . Additionally, students have many opportunities to expand their learning beyond the classroom at the annual meeting. What at the meeting, students can learn about graduate opportunities, internships and present scholarly work. These avenues for engagement help expand and deepen their appreciation of the sociological imagination.

In essence, our commitment remains loyal to our motto: Promoting Excellence in Teaching, Research and Service. It is about promoting the best for not only our members, but also for the communities of which we are a part. Plan to attend the 2016 MSSA in North Charleston....it will be an exciting event!

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MSSA Forum: The Voice of the Mid-South Sociological Association Spring 2016

About our President

42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association

DeMond S. Miller (PhD-Mississippi State University) is a Professor of Sociology, Director of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Institute for Research and Community Service and he directs the B.A. program in Disasters, Crisis and Emergency Management at Rowan University (Glassboro, New Jersey). He first attended the Mid-South Sociological Society in 1993 as an undergraduate student at Northeast Louisiana University (the University of Louisiana at Monroe); he continued to attend and engage in the meetings throughout graduate school. Since beginning his tenure at Rowan University, he has worked as principal investigator to facilitate federally-funded projects involving natural and technological disasters, environmental issues, and community development/community satisfaction initiatives in Camden, New Jersey. His primary area of specialization is environmental sociology (disaster studies), community development/community organizing, community-based research and social impact assessment. Examples of his scholarly articles can be found in the *Journal of Critical Incident Analysis*, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *International Journal of Emergency Services*, *Sociological Spectrum*, *Journal of Applied Security Research: Prevention and Response in Asset Protection, Terrorism and Violence*. Dr. Miller is the co-author of Hurricane Katrina and the Redefinition of Landscape with J. Rivera (the 2008 recipient of *The Stanford M. Lyman Distinguished Book Award*), co-editor with Rivera of How Ethnically Marginalized Americans Cope with Catastrophic Disaster: Studies in Suffering and Resiliency, Community Disaster Recovery and Resiliency: Exploring Global Opportunities and Challenges and African American and Community Engagement in Higher Education: Community Service, Service Learning and Community-Based Research with S. Evans, C. Taylor, and M. Dunlap. He is currently working on a series of projects related to disaster recovery, disasters/emergency response and security, disasters and social policy frameworks, and the ongoing humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe with colleagues in Greece. As an applied sociologist, he works with local community development initiatives and non-profit organizations. Dr. Miller has worked to build coalitions among communities and academic institutions and he received the Distinguished Leadership in Service and Community Volunteerism Award from Rowan University. Dr. Miller is a founding board member of the Camden Academy Charter High School (Camden, New Jersey) and is one of the Board of Trustees' Past Presidents. Additionally, he holds professional credentials in Clinical Substance Abuse Counseling.

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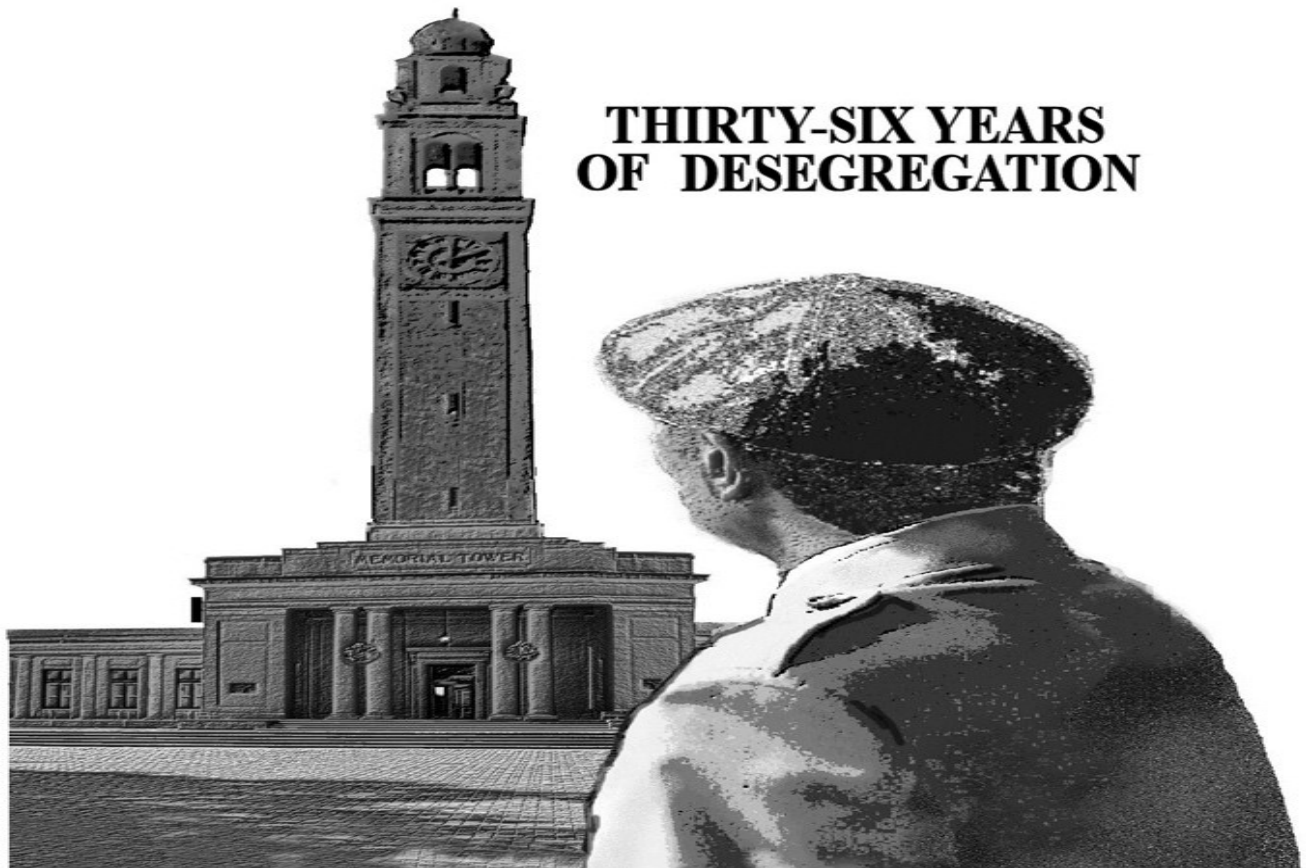


MSSA Forum:
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Spring 2016

Dr. Thomas Durant Jr.

PLENARY ADDRESS LAFAYETTE, LA OCT 22, 2015

A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE...



**THIRTY-SIX YEARS
OF DESEGREGATION**

THOMAS J. DURANT, JR.

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

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Dr. Durant, in the spirit of critical sociological inquiry, conducted a case study of the desegregation of a major historically white institution of higher education in the South, from 1973 to 2009. He addresses the **problem of how racial desegregation is measured**. Specifically it is measured by the number and percentage of blacks or racial minorities within a university over a given period. However, little is known about the internal dynamics of desegregation, such as attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, cultural environments, race relations, and cultural transformation that occurred on the campuses of predominantly white institutions (PWI's). Consequently, little is known about how different patterns of desegregation evolve within different PWI's.

Dr. Durant addressed this problem through the lens of the following concepts:

Racial desegregation: the process by which members of a minority race, voluntarily or by court order, enter a majority race institution.

Racial integration: the process by which different racial groups share and interact as equals within the same institution.

Cultural diversity: the racial, ethnic, and demographic composition of the university.

Cultural equity: the degree of equality in the distribution and representation of different racial or ethnic groups in programs, resources, and positions within a given institution or population.

Cultural transformation: a process that involves changes in the quality and quantity of programs and organizations that comprise the institutional structure and cultural environment on the university.

Multiculturalism: the doctrine and practice that represent people from different cultures, sharing the same space, and learning and respecting the culture of each other.

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Dr. Durant then outlined the desegregation process in this order: getting in (admission and employment), staying in (retention/persistence), helping others get in (recruitment), promoting change (cultural transformation), and getting out honorably (graduation/retirement). Methodology for this analysis included qualitative approaches of biographical narrative, longitudinal case study, and constructionist phenomenology as he conducted an institutional ethnography of a large PWI in the Southeastern U.S. His data included memoirs, records, reports, newspapers, and observations. He analyzed and synthesized the data revealing a “ten-point negotiation plan” for faculty which included position/rank, type of appointment, duties, course load, research support, moving expenses, tenure status, salary, office space, and relocation & readjustment.

FINDINGS: STAGES OF DESEGREGATION Findings indicate four stages in desegregation.

STAGE ONE (1942-1964)

Legal challenges and institutional resistance: this stage involved de facto desegregation characterized by protracted episodes of legal petitions by plaintiffs who sued the university to gain admission and strong resistance from university officials and their legal counsel (see * pg 11 for relevant cases).

STAGE TWO (1965-1980)

Accommodation and affirmative action: this stage involved the implementation of affirmative action and the gradual admission of African Americans in token numbers in an atmosphere of co-existence, compromise, and adaptation. This stage was marked by desegregation without integration and equity of African Americans in the social, cultural, and structural hierarchy of the university.

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STAGE THREE (1981-1996)

Affirmative action and consent decree: this stage involved the use of affirmative action as a means of attaining desegregation that included monitoring of the minority population, creating equal opportunities for minorities, and addressing grievances pertaining to racial discrimination. This stage also involved implementation of the consent decree settlement for desegregation, and the elimination of the dual race system of higher education.

STAGE FOUR (1997-2010+)

Diversity and multiculturalism: this stage involved the implementation of programs and activities that reflected the cultural interests and needs of different minority groups in the university, guided by the doctrine of multiculturalism that promoted tolerance, mutual understanding, and sharing among different groups that shared a common space.

EFFECTS OF DESEGREGATION The effects of desegregation included, black male-female disparity, racial disparity in athletics, creation of black organizations & programs, racial discrimination in employment, black students' protests, black firsts, white racial hostility, interracial dialogues, racial unrest in residence halls, interracial debates/race relations. **Institutional approaches to desegregation included the creation of a council on campus minorities, affirmative action program, consent decrees, commissions & task forces, minority recruitment, office of minority affairs, vice chancellor for diversity, chancellor's breakfast, African American Cultural Center, African American Studies Program and ultimately a scholarship scandal.**

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CONCLUSIONS

Racial desegregation of PWIs involved a movement for civil rights to gain freedom, justice, and equality in the form of educational opportunities, educational equity, and equality of education at PWIs.

The increase in educational opportunities and equality through racial desegregation of PWIs contributed to an increase in human capital and social capital, and SES for blacks that were essential to achieving middle class status and thus, the American Dream.

Efforts from the coalition of black groups and organizations at PWIs contributed to racial desegregation and African Americans at PWIs played a major role in the desegregation of the university.

Race relations were strained and racial tension and conflicts were created from resistance of Whites to desegregate their Organizations and share their power, privileges, and resources with African Americans.

African Americans created their own groups and organizations to satisfy their needs and interest because of selective discrimination and social and cultural interests.

The university was established as an institution of racial exclusion where traditional White norms were established that were difficult to change.

Racial desegregation was not only a matter of recruiting blacks, but changing the very structure, organization, and environment to make it more conducive for the Integration of Blacks.

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CONCLUSIONS (cont)

The emergence of African American groups, organizations, and cultural programs and activities, contributed to the cultural diversity and cultural transformation of the University.

An effective strategy for desegregation was to hire African American Deans and Department Heads in positions of authority to recruit African American students and personnel.

The increase in the number of first Blacks was indicative of breaking the color barrier that served as a pathway to upward mobility for blacks, but at the same time symptomatic of racial inequality, discrimination, and inequality in the distribution of wealth, power, and privileges.

Ultimately, findings show that simple desegregation is unlikely to attain the goals of inclusion and what is needed is cultural transformation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Desegregation Studies at HBCUs

Diversity Studies at HBCUs

Integration of White Students at HBCUs

Longitudinal Studies of Desegregation at PWIs

Regional Differences of Desegregation at PWIs

Integration of Hispanic & Asian Immigrants in Higher Education

African American Alumni of PWIs: Costs & Benefits

African American Faculty at PWIs: Costs & Benefits

A Grounded Theory of Desegregation as Component of Civil Rights

*BROWN vs TOPEKA, KANSAS, 1954; ADAMS vs RICHARDSON 1972, 1973; WILLIE ROBINSON vs LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 1942; CHARLES HATFIELD vs LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 1946; UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS vs U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 1950; ROY WILSON vs LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 1950; DARRYL FOISTER vs LSU BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, 1951; LUTRILL PAYNE vs LSU BOARD

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The Mid-South's Impact Beyond Our Region: i-Witness to Sociology

On the Borders of Europe and Humanity

Dr. Demond Miller



While on the Island of Lesbos, I witnessed a human-induced disaster, the mass exodus of refugees, from the Syrian Civil War who had come ashore in Greece. The large number of refugees and migrants sparked a humanitarian crisis, unseen since the Second World War. In Just the first three months of 2015, over 600,000 people entered Europe, averaging approximately 10,000 people a day (Vick, 2016). Many of them embarked from Turkey in small boats, frail rubber rafts or flotillas in an attempt to reach the Greek islands, namely Lesbos, Kos and Chios. Bound together by a fear of persecution, both or former and impending, some asylum seekers attempt to swim ap-

proximately five miles on the open Aegean Sea with nothing more than inflatable tire tubing. Men, women, and children risk their lives daily for a perceived better life away from the bloodshed of their homeland. Traveling many miles to get from the reach of the Syrian Civil War, these migrants enter the unknown. Sometimes, the journey comes at a fatal cost. Upon reaching Greece, the ordeal continues as many seek the necessary documents needed to permit travel to reach their desired destinations in Northern and Western Europe. After all of the harsh conditions the refugees encounter by sea to reach the Greek islands, they must now begin the next leg of their journey by boat to Athens and then to the Macedonia border. At the Macedonia border, the humanitarian crisis comes to a halt as Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia have closed their borders leaving hundreds of thousands stranded in Greece. For tens, if not hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees trapped in Greece, time is spent in refugee camps and in makeshift tent cities built along the shores of the sea they crossed. The tragic struggle to reach the European Union is fraught with uncertainty about the future, frailty of social position and existential insecurity (see Bauman 2007).





The Mid-South's Impact Beyond Our Region: i-Witness to Sociology

On the Borders of Europe and Humanity

Dr. Demond Miller

Vick, K. (2015, October 19). The Great Migration: Rarely in modern history have so many been so desperate to flee. Now their brave, and tragic, journey are reshaping Europe and the world. Time.

Bauman, Z. (2007). Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty. Cambridge: Polity.

Picture Captions: Tent city emerges on the Island of Lesbos, Greece under the Greek Statue of Liberty

Photo by: DeMond Miller

Three young men take selfie photos to mark their inner tube journey across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to the Island of Lesbos

Photo by: DeMond Miller

i-Witness to Sociology is a section of The MSSA Forum. Members are encouraged to submit articles of approximately 500 words that reflect on the current topic relevant to sociology.

~DeMond Miller is professor of Sociology and director of the Liberal Arts & Sciences Institute for Research and Community Service; he leads the Program in Disasters, Crisis and Emergency Management. His current research focuses on disaster recovery and projects ranging from disaster response and security to the ongoing humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe with colleagues in Greece.

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The Human Connection Conscience within Distance Learning:

The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals

Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

ABSTRACT: The academic online environment offers, at times, mixed messages to students. There are faculty and administrative disparities...principles (regulations) and principals (the actors involved). Do negative faculty directions impact student motivation negatively due to inconsistencies in student-faculty-counselor multi-diverse relationships?

Higher education is moving in so many different directions. Economic, social and technological pressures can “disintermediate” traditional operations. In the last part of the 19th century higher education changed dramatically. Students of wealth were flocking to Europe, such as Berlin, to experience new methods of learning and inquiry. Today, many universities operate in the complete regulatory process, and ignore affection, support and emotional intelligence. Today, as well, the cards are turned, and many universities in the United States are enticing students who live overseas to register in colleges in the United States.

Though the formal is important, and money is the dominant factor, some counselors are quick to say to students, who may be having difficulty, “Why’d don’t you drop out?” In the beginning of the 20th century scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Jane Addams, and John Dewey described how teaching and research, empowerment and learning could be linked to the greater good for those seeking greater horizons to fulfill their infinite dreams. The quality of positive living and achievement can mostly be fulfilled by encouraging our students to go forward in their academic pursuits.

Toward those ends can we look at our online community – teaching and learning – as a service learning community? Thus, the title of this presentation is the following: “The Conscience within Distance Learning: *The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals.*” Some of our working students are employed and receiving wages and salaries that we will never earn, but they want that degree. Thus, we and our students are both listeners and facilitators in a circular process of sharing, coming from different cultures, communities and having diverse life experiences. We are here for one reason only – to learn from each other, and to expand each person’s horizon beyond infinity. For some we offer a new world, for some, an unnerving experience, for all to move forward in their individual journeys, both personal and professional.

Conscience within Distance Learning – if we stretch the academic curriculum throughout the global environments we must understand the sensitivity and the knowledge of why we are here. That sensitivity is rooted in “conscience,” in its moral commitment to serve, and to serve without judgment.

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The Human Connection Conscience within Distance Learning:

The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals

Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

Part of the most invaluable components of distance learning is the ability to encounter experiences beyond our own for both students and faculty. Our sense of the world is our moral conscience if we do not pre-judge. Yes, university administration has rules and regulations. I see administering rules and regulations going in and out like an accordion, depending on the circumstances, the actions, and even the contradictions within the situations. What does our conscience – our gut feeling tell us – what is right, what is wrong...is there a right or a wrong? Sensitivity within our conscience helps us to listen to that inner voice.

Our chat rooms are transformative settings and sites for us, for our students, and their intergenerational friends and family who are listening with them. Long after “day is done,” and our students have graduated, they will understand “from whence we have cometh,” and we will understand “from whence they have cometh.” Hopefully, we all began on the same path, “crying out coming out of the womb,” naked and hands reaching out; and then we move away from that equanimity. Today we must recognize we are in this together – what we help to form today, becomes the reality of tomorrow for our students and for ourselves.

In one class one student wrote to another the following: “Your handling of the subject matter will get you to do the assignment in no time.” I wrote back, “You are writing a paper on the emergency plan to evacuate and help people during a natural disaster, such as a flood or an earthquake...your paper may save a life one day; this is not a paper to get first a grade and get done in no time...this is a paper to lay out a plan for emergency evacuations, and what you lay out may save a life one day...one’s conscience and morals must dictate the morality of what you are sharing – to learn how to do better each moment of the day.”

The academic online environment offers mixed messages, sometimes disorder, ambiguity, inflexibility, contradictions, rigid with regulations. There are faculty disparities. We need innovation, expeditious handling, flexibility in managing the changing needs of students who do care, and are eager to learn, amidst their personal and professional anxieties and turmoil.

The central question I pose is, “Does negative faculty leadership and thoughts of students dropping out, and sometimes, directing such, is the following: “Does negative faculty leadership and direction impact student motivation negatively due to inconsistencies in student- faculty – multi-diverse relationships?” Is it true that the personal aspects of our students’ lives outside the university become mostly invisible within? Can we look at our online teaching and learning community as a service functioning community? As a service functioning community do we not have to cast the net and help our student to recognize their gifts? What matters for each of us, students and faculty, is not our name, letters after our name, and our expertise.

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The Human Connection Conscience within Distance Learning:

The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals

Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

Do you know we have students who are homeless and who do not know where they will sleep this night? Do you know we have students with five children who were burned out of their home, and the counselor told the student to quit school? Do you know the single mother with five children moved five times in one month, from a rat infested hotel, to a hotel that had drug addicts in the next room? The mother during that time was hospitalized with pneumonia. The oldest daughter during that time was singing in her church choir. The mother during this turbulent time got all her homework done, and *did not quit*, because she and the professor said, “No Way.” Often a professor does not know a student has quit, until after the fact. Should not the professor be told *before the fact*?

Would you not have assumed that keeping up with her inner discipline of school responsibility was her life-line? Do you know that one Sunday night, I GOT AN EMAIL that said, ‘you won’t see me tomorrow, I am in a room that has a pipe filling with gas? What was I to do...I could not get to sleep without handling it. No one had answered any phone numbers at the school. I called the local sheriff’s office where I lived, not knowing from where the Email had come. He came to the house, saw the Email, went out to his county car, to locate from where the Email was coming. After a short while, he came back in, and said, “Carol, we found him...in California.”

Do you know I had a soldier who had been wounded, and was now a paraplegic., and whose wife was in the same class...I told him to dictate his responses to his wife, and she would type out the assignment. Do you know I had a colleague who had a student who pleaded for an incomplete? The colleague responded, “Of course, but why are you pleading?” The student replied, you have not heard from me for a few weeks; I was shot in Afghanistan, and have been in a coma for two weeks – my other professor said, “NO.”

Do you know that students experience death among their families and friends during the term, and have a difficult time coping – death of a child, still born babies. Illnesses of close friends and family members, even murder – many beyond our own experiences of reality?

I had a female student who was married; she had to sneak to do her homework because her husband absolutely did not want her going to college. I have had a single mother who was beaten by her ex-husband. I have had students who lost their jobs in the midst of going to school. Many times we are the person of “last resort” before the students are told to quit by their counselor. We could go on and on, and I am certain you have stories to share.

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The Human Connection Conscience within Distance Learning:

The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals

Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

My thesis is, though, there may be regulations defined as “principles,” we must consider the human principles of reality, compassion, flexibility, regardless of the rules. I am told some professors do not. My response is “that a plane is, at times, late and the rules are not followed as per the schedule. We must do the same, if we are to keep our students motivated and progress towards their infinite achievements. *Principles in regulations must be guided by principals (actors) of humanity, flexibility, courage, compassion.*

My thesis is that we must recognize that the sense of humanity must bind us; we cannot ignore this. We are related to one another, as we seek to expand that deeper commitment to one another.

I had one student who works in a correction institution, comment to me on the phone, “ I try to sneak in my homework.” I told her, “Absolutely not.” You are working in a highly regulatory agency... if you have to be late with your homework, that is fine – no penalty, and do not use the word, “sneak.” The only thing you and I have going for each other is our integrity and our character, no matter our title, expertise, or letters after our name. Unfortunately, look at the young American student, who was on tour with his school in North Korea – he admitted he took a poster of the hotel wall as a souvenir, was handcuffed, and now supposedly given fifteen years in hard labor-I pray that our country will help him.

Rules and regulations depend on the circumstances, and are not sealed into cement. We need to recognize the cement cracks from time to time. Some of our students are testing the waters; some are fearful to discuss what they do not know; some actually raise their voices when the two of us are alone in the chat “room.” One said he was “tired,” and felt his dissertation was done. I responded, “do not tell me you are ‘tired,’ and feel your dissertation is done.” My friend, who had been appointed to Gambia as ambassador had kept saying, “She was tired.” She was killed five days before she was to fly out of Kennedy Airport. Her possessions were already on the high seas. If you go to Gambia, in the center of the capital there is a plaque, and it reads, “In memory of Ambassador Ruth Washington.”

My doctorate took 15 years, but I earned it... I was “never tired;” I was elated to be allowed to pursue the research. I told this student that if you want your doctorate, the first thing you need to do is to stop raising your voice... a 42 year middle age person does not need to raise his voice; that will not help you get your doctorate completed; it will only hinder the process of accomplishment. You are a unique person, so let us finish your work diligently and properly with excitement and challenge. You have written a unique paper; it is on nuclear research, and is original.

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The Human Connection Conscience within Distance Learning:

The Uneven Mix of Principles and Principals

Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

As we witness the growth and expansion of distance learning we recognize that not one of us is perfect, for one's perfection is another's imperfection. There are challenges that we need to understand as we ourselves improve and reorganize our challenges and behavioral attitudes. We must recognize that in our knowledge fields teaching is not static, but evolves into deeper emotional awareness and new emotional relevance. In essence, distant learning is focused on the student as individual, and not as group.

We must understand that our students have lives that include so much more than school – work, family, death, finance, personal responsibilities, sickness, homelessness, and so many other facts, that maybe we cannot even imagine.

In 1991 Peter Drucker, the management guru, predicted that in the next fifty years, “schools and universities will change more drastically than they have since they assumed their present form some 300 years ago when they organized themselves around the print form of learning.”

Distance learning is a reflection of a new order to education that is without borders...an American soldier gets up at 4 in the morning in Afghanistan to participate in a chat thousands of miles away; a corporate leader from the United States is doing the same, while on a business trip in Japan; a truck driver doing long distance trucking pulls over to the side of the road and gets out his laptop.

Distance learning will forever extend and grow beyond its global dimensions; beyond all concepts of dimensions as we now know it, even looking at Skype, the Cloud and from a space station.

Our life's journey brings us together through different paths, diversified experiences and cultures – through pathways we never knew existed. As in the sense of Buddha, “I am my neighbor.” So we are each other's' conscience as we approach the greatest physical distances in learning, and teaching, recognizing our individual responsibilities, and understanding flexibility in the interpretation of rule and regulations as they affect our clientele (actors), students, faculty and fellow staff.

We are each other's teachers – we the faculty are also students. Our lives are woven into infinite growth because we recognize that how we treat each other is part of our sensitivity and conscience, long before we have traveled the distance “to meet” each other.

There really is no flood of references of what is needed for each student. Some of our students come to us walking on eggshells, owning no computer, going to the library each day for a very specified time to work on

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Dr. Caroline Shaffer, Westerhoff

their homework – even husbands out of work, and spouses supporting the family outside of the home. Some are in hospital bed as a patient, or sitting by the hospital bed because a family member, including a child may be desperately ill. Some may work in a prison system under very strong regulations that must be adhered to.

Technology provides higher education with the potential to disseminate more knowledge than ever before, whether fact or fiction. We must recognize that our landscape of dimension is as different as the people we serve, regardless of their station in life or who they are or what they have accomplished at this point in their lives. Distance learning has different perspectives for different persons. Our enthusiasm and our passions need to understand this. What are the precepts for older students who have so many obligations – how do we guide them to succeed towards their infinite goals?

One student was getting a second MBA. I queried, “Why not go for a doctorate?” Her response was, “No one ever told me.” We must educate – we must train our academic counselors to look to the future. We know that the environment of today’s learning is not only for personal growth but is critical for more than economic survival... it is also is for one’s own self-esteem, particularly in an environment where such may never have existed. That is why as principles in the lives of our students, we must become the principal instruments of “last resort.” We must be the helpers to lead our students to their glory; we must guide our students to their good, glowing destinations. If we do not, who will? Does not emotional intelligence include self-awareness, other-awareness and emotional management? We have the responsibility, as faculty, to help our students lead their lives with academic awareness and within the dimensions of healthy, self-sustaining emotional intelligence.

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association’s website at:

www.midsouthsoc.org



MSSA Forum:
The Voice of the Mid-South Sociological Association
Spring 2016

Call For Papers

President-Elect Dr. Shirley Rainey-Brown

Get Ready ! Get Ready! Get Ready!

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PARTICIPATION

2016, 42nd MSSA Annual Conference in North Charleston, October 12 -15th.

Transforming the Sociological Landscape:

The Quest for Reconstruction and a Paradigmatic Shift."

Deadline: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016.

See: <http://www.midsouthsoc.org/conference/mssa-conference-schedule/>

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

www.midsouthsoc.org



***Transforming the Sociological Landscape: The Quest for
Reconstruction and a Paradigmatic Shift."***

October 12-15, 2016 North Charleston, SC

Online Registration!

It is time to get excited for the 2016 MSSA meetings in North Charleston, South Carolina coming up October 12-15, 2016!

Online registration (accepting credit/debit cards) is now available. It's never too early to register! The deadline for conference registration and hotel reservations is September 24, 2016

If you would like to use this option, go to : <https://www.meetingsavvy.org/mssa/> Members who prefer to pay with check or money order, please use the attached mail-in form.

For more detailed information about the conference, visit our page here: <http://www.midsouthsoc.org/> If you have questions regarding registration/membership, email me at rchill@uni.edu OR mssa.sec.treasurer@gmail.com

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at: www.midsouthsoc.org



MSSA Forum: The Voice of the Mid-South Sociological Association Spring 2016

MSSA: Lifetime Memberships

42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association

The Mid-South Sociological Association is pleased to introduce its “Life Membership” program. The Life Membership program is an extension of our continued efforts to further strengthen the financial health of MSSA by establishing and supporting a fund that provides fiscal organizational stability. Life Membership monies will be housed in an account separate from existing funds and invested in such a manner as only interest monies will be drawn from the account to support MSSA activities; except for financial exigency. Ultimately, becoming a Life Member is a means for you to demonstrate your appreciation of, commitment to and cement your legacy in MSSA while receiving numerous benefits.

Life Member Category

The life member is a member who has paid for a life membership in full or through the installment plan. All individuals granted Life Membership are guaranteed the full benefits thereof during their lifetime.

Life Memberships are not transferable to any other person(s). The sole proprietor(s) of a life membership does not have authorization to grant ownership of his/her said life membership to any other person (s). The Mid-South Sociological Association reserves the right to deny all requests to transfer ownership of any membership category

Tax Deductible Contribution

The life membership dues are 100% tax deductible. The Mid-South Sociological Association reserves the right to provide a receipt to the life member for the tax deductible contribution.

Installment Plan Policy

The life member agrees to complete payment of their membership category within two years from the month of their initial payment. The Mid-South Sociological Association does not recognize one’s life membership status until all payments for the category being achieved is received. If payments discontinue prior to full payment and collection efforts fail, the life membership will be placed in a delinquent status and no benefits will be provided until full payment for the membership category is received.

Refunds The Mid-South Sociological Association reserves the right to deny a refund for any membership category, including one’s discontinuance of payment of a membership category currently in progress.

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association’s website at::

www.midsouthsoc.org



**MSSA Forum:
The Voice of the Mid-South Sociological Association
Spring 2016**

MSSA: Lifetime Memberships

42nd Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Sociological Association

Life Membership Categories

Platinum	\$2,500 and above
Gold	\$2,000
Silver	\$1,500
Bronze	\$1,000

Benefits: Receipt of a plaque and letter from the MSSA President recognizing your achievement

No yearly membership fee payment (You will need to pay yearly conference registration fee)

Reserved seating at the annual dinner/banquet

Special recognition in the annual printed program

Upon completion of payment, the opportunity to donate \$200 of your total membership payment to a specific MSSA effort (e.g., MSSA General Fund; MSSA Minority Fund; Sponsored Undergraduates; and Stanford Lyman Scholarship Fund)

NON-LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Friend of MSSA \$500 Friend of MSSA is an entry level membership category that can lead into the life membership program. Benefits: Receipt of a plaque and letter from the MSSA President recognizing your achievement Yearly membership fee reduced by ½ for life Upon completion of payment, the opportunity to donate \$200 of your total membership payment to a specific MSSA effort (e.g., MSSA General Fund; MSSA Minority Fund; Sponsored Undergraduates; and Stanford Lyman Scholarship Fund)

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

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FORUM: The Voice of the Mid-South CALL FOR EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

The purpose of the newsletter is to give voice to our members, honoring those who have passed and are still with us by learning from their experiences and celebrating their accomplishments. Forum disseminates information, motivates participation, promotes unity, and supplements records. In addition, Forum can help serve the overall goal of MSSA, to provide another resource to “expand opportunities to publish papers and become more professionally active” (Palmer FA15 Forum page 16). By the creation of an editorial board to aid in achieving the goals of Forum.

Responsibilities of Editors: Write and gather material, (through calls for submissions and personal contacts (see list of potential topics/areas below), edit articles and proofread final drafts of the newsletter.

LIST OF POTENTIAL TOPICS/AREAS FOR EDITORS:

- ◆ Teacher Feature: Featured Article(s) (activities, musings, practical and/or theoretical).
- ◆ Research: Featured Article (a summary of publication or new area of publication, state of the discipline etc.)
- ◆ Service: Featured Article (activities, musings, opportunities, practical and/or theoretical).
- ◆ Member focus (interview with members)
- ◆ Meeting information, including interviews, summaries and speaker bios
- ◆ News and Announcements from Committees (including meet the executive committee articles).
- ◆ Presidents Columns
- ◆ Other featured columns eg. i-witness: 500 word reflection on a topic relevant to sociology

If you are interested please send Dr. Tina Deshotels your contact information and area of interest to tdeshotels@jsu.edu



MSSA Member Publications

EDUCATION

"The collection of essays assembled in *What to Expect and How to Respond* offers clear insight into the world of higher education as experienced from the vantage point of minority faculty and administrators, at various stages of their careers. Each compelling narrative emphasizes overcoming challenges and obstacles in 'lense' and oftentimes 'traumatic' environments. This unique text provides readers with a lens to deconstruct events and ways to build resilience within institutions in which they could otherwise feel defenseless."

—DEMOND S. MILLER, director, Liberal Arts and Sciences Institute for Research and Community Service, Rowan University

"*What to Expect and How to Respond* addresses race and cultural democracy in the American academy from the perspectives of a select racially and culturally diverse group of women and men. The horrors and distress described are painful to read. More importantly, however, while perceived horrors and distress exist, insight is provided to those who seek ways to be victorious rather than victims."

—DELORES P. ALDRIDGE, Ph.D, Emory University, Grace Towns Hamilton, distinguished professor emerita of sociology and African American studies, Emory University

"*What to Expect and How to Respond* should be required reading for graduate students in professional seminars. Entering the job of university professor can seem, to the outsider, to be a laid back position with lots of free time and wonderful colleagues. Those of us who have had careers as professors quickly learned that much of this is not true. Finally this academic reality has been put between two covers. Read each chapter, learn the lessons given; enter the ivory tower, and become successful!"

—CRAIG J. FORSYTH, editor, *Deviant Behavior*, University of Louisiana, Lafayette

What to Expect and How to Respond: Distress and Success in Academia offers a solutions-oriented glimpse into life in academia from the vantage point of groups including students, faculty and administrators. This interdisciplinary anthology provides insight into the profession for graduate students planning to become academics; brings to the attention of junior faculty potential tenure and promotion pitfalls as well as strategies to successfully overcome potential obstacles; offers senior faculty strategies to improve collegiality and the workplace environment; and provides administrators with tools to proactively and effectively contend with sensitive managerial matters. This book is useful for undergraduate and graduate students preparing for a career in academia, whether as staff, faculty or administrators, and is also an excellent resource for those already in academia who may be experiencing any of the specific challenges highlighted here.

EARL WRIGHT II is professor of Africana Studies at the University of Cincinnati and the author of groundbreaking works on the contributions of W. E. B. Du Bois and the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory to American sociology. He is also the past president of the Association of Black Sociologists and Mid-South Sociological Association.

THOMAS C. CALHOUN is associate vice president for Academic and Student Affairs and professor of sociology at Jackson State University and he has published extensively in the area of deviance. He is past president of the Association of Black Sociologists, Mid-South Sociological Association and North Central Sociological Association.

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CALHOUN

WHAT TO EXPECT AND HOW TO RESPOND

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WHAT TO EXPECT AND HOW TO RESPOND



Distress and Success in Academia

EDITED BY EARL WRIGHT II
AND THOMAS C. CALHOUN

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

www.midsouthsoc.org



THE CONGRATULATION STATION MSSA MEMBERS

You have made us all proud!!!

Member Publications/Awards/promotions/accolades

Thomas J. Durant, Jr. was the keynote speaker for the 47th Annual Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association Conference on February 25, 2016 at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

Dr. Jeremy Ross of Jacksonville State University has an article forthcoming in *Sociological Spectrum* "Durkheim and the Homo Duplex: Anthropocentrism in Sociology" His presentation was entitled "The State of Sociology in Alabama and Mississippi: What's in Your Wallet?" The presentation was centered around the theme of the conference "The State of Sociology in Alabama and Mississippi" which focused on challenges facing the A-MSA and other state and regional sociological associations. In addressing the state of sociology in Alabama and Mississippi, Durant suggested conducting a survey of sociology departments that included the following questions (that may also be considered by the Mid-South Sociological Association):

Dr. Erin Rider of Jacksonville State University has earned tenure and been promoted to Associate Professor of Sociology

Dr. Tina Deshotels of Jacksonville State University has been promoted to Full Professor.

Dr. Sarah Donley of Jacksonville State University has published: Yelich Biniiecki, Susan and Sarah Donley. 2016. "The Righteous Among the Nations of the World: An Exploration of Free-Choice Learning." *Sage Open*.

Sarah Donley was also awarded a Faculty Research Grant at Jacksonville University for *Cash in a Flash: An Ethnographic Investigation into Workplace Practices and Services Provided by Payday Loan and Title Loan Businesses*.

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

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RESEARCH BRIEFS MSSA MEMBERS

TAKING NOTES: RESEARCH BRIEFS

Member Research In Progress

I am currently working on a book project entitled *Expeditions: Rituals, Crews, and Hazardous Ventures*. The study examines the accounts of several dozen polar expeditions conducted between 1850 and 1950. The key question concerns how ritual practices may contribute to the social cohesion and morale of crews undertaking extremely dangerous ventures such as these. Evidence collected so far suggests that ritual activities greatly contribute to the social and personal well-being of crews. I plan to complete the book in the coming year.

Dr. David Knottnerus, Emeritus Regents Professor of Sociology, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

In conjunction with Dr. Jeremy Ross, Dr. Craig Forsyth and Jennifer Fulmer, I am working on a research project that examines 'honor violence', or violence that is justified by a religious community and perpetrated against others (most often family members). We will examine honor violence that is justified by appealing to Islamic and Christian beliefs (e.g. Christian Domestic Discipline).

Dr. Tina Deshotels, Program Coordinator, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL

I am currently working on two research projects. The first involves student's knowledge about resources available and policies handling university sexual assault. Her second research project involves looking at prevalence and business practices of payday and title loans businesses in Alabama.

Dr. Sarah Donley, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL 36265

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

www.midsouthsoc.org



Opportunity Knocks for MSSA MEMBERS

Research Networks

INTRODUCING RN1 and RN2

THE NEW MSSA RESEARCH NETWORKS

RN1 Disasters RN2 Gender and Sexuality

What are MSSA Research Networks

Research networks have been established to foster the on-going intellectual life and career development of MSSA members. They are groups that are actively engaged in a line of scholarship of common interest. They have regular meetings that coincide with the Annual Meeting of the MSSA and have a role in preparing the program for our annual meeting by submitting thematic sessions. These sessions tend to be smaller and more homogeneous in nature in order to promote an intellectual exchange of ideas. Ideally, research networks continue to work beyond the annual meeting setting and cover sociological themes relevant to members of the Mid-South region. Research networks, in conjunction with the annual meeting program chair, will be allocated time slots during the annual meeting to design a scholarly environment in either a paper session, meeting, poster session, roundtable, workshop, book discussion or panel format.

What are the Benefits of MSSA Research Network Membership?

Exciting colleague engagement, Each RN has the opportunity to collectively propose a special issue of the Official Journal of the MSSA, *Sociological Spectrum*, Presentation of a Research Award
Half (½) page allotment in the MSSA newsletter, FORUM: The Voice of The Mid-South Sociological Association

For more information about joining the new RNs:

RN1 Disasters Dr. Jessica Pardee jwpgss@rit.edu

RN2 Gender and Sexuality Dr. Melissa Powell-Williams mpwilliams@gru.edu



POTENTIAL PROJECTS

DR. THOMAS J. DURANT JR.

Thomas J. Durant, Jr. was the keynote speaker for the 47th Annual Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association Conference on February 25, 2016 at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. His presentation was entitled "The State of Sociology in Alabama and Mississippi: What's in Your Wallet?" The presentation was centered around the theme of the conference "The State of Sociology in Alabama and Mississippi" which focused on challenges facing the A-MSA and other state and regional sociological associations. In addressing the state of sociology in Alabama and Mississippi, Durant suggested conducting a survey of sociology departments that included the following questions (that may also be considered by the Mid-South Sociological Association):

The multiple response categories for your answers include the following: "yes or no;" or a numerical score on a scale from zero to 10; or specify your answer.

- 1. Are you currently a member of the A-MSA? What's in your wallet?**
- 2. Did you bring an undergraduate or graduate student with you to this conference?**
- 3. Is there a sociology club in your department at your university?**
- 4. Is there an undergraduate faculty-student mentoring program in your department?**
- 5. Has your sociology department implemented a strategic plan within the past 5 years?**
- 6. Is there an undergraduate honors program in your department?**
- 7. To what extent do senior level faculty teach introductory sociology courses?**
- 8. Has the number of undergraduate majors increased or decreased in your department in the past five years?**
- 9. Does your department have an undergraduate research program?**
- 10. Do you include a research project or paper in your undergraduate courses?**
- 11. What types of educational technology do you use for classroom instruction?**
- 12. To what extent are service-learning courses included in sociology courses in your department?**

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

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POTENTIAL PROJECTS (CONT)

DR. THOMAS J. DURANT JR.

- 13. What is the level of diversity in your department, including gender, ethnic minorities, international students, and non-traditional students?**
- 14. If you teach at a community college, what is your level of satisfaction with the state of the sociology component at your college?**
- 15. Are you satisfied with the quality of the administrative leadership in your department?**
- 16. What types of financial and academic support exists for undergraduate students?**
- 17. Have you lately attended a faculty development workshop for improvement of teaching, research, and advising?**
- 18. What is the 6-year graduation rate for undergraduate students in your department?**
- 19. How many undergraduate students from your department have enrolled in graduate school in the past five years?**
- 20. What types of jobs have been acquired by graduates of your undergraduate program?**
- 21. What outstanding achievements have been made by your graduates in the past five years?**
- 22. What is your department best known for at your university?**
- 23. How does your department contribute to achievement of the mission and goals of the university and how does this figure into the strategic plan of the university?**

For more information, see the MidSouth Sociological Association's website at:

www.midsouthsoc.org

Call For Papers Proposals Due: December 15, 2016



Creating Global Change: An Interdisciplinary Conference in Women's and Gender Studies

Thursday, March 23 – Saturday, March 25, 2017

Middle Tennessee State University Campus, Murfreesboro, TN
(30 miles from Nashville, TN)



We invite individual or panel proposals for presentations on any topic on women's, gender, and sexuality issues and debates from scholars, activists, non-profit professionals, and graduate students in all scholarly fields and disciplines, including the humanities, sciences, social sciences, education, arts, design, business, law, health and sports. We are especially interested in presentations that provide feminist perspectives on the influence of women's, gender, and sexuality movements on gendered existence, global and social justice, and institutional transformation.

Featured Speaker Urvashi Vaid



LGBT Leader, Attorney, Community Organizer, and Author Vaid depicts an award-winning analysis of the gay rights movement. As the Director of the Engaging Tradition Project, she studies the use of tradition in arguments by advocates of gender and sexuality-based social justice projects to shape legal and legislative strategies, frame public education messages, and strengthen arguments that advance the rights of groups seeking social justice.

Jodi Solomon Speakers Bureau

The 2017 conference theme emphasizes social transformation and empowerment in women's, gender, and sexuality movements. Conference topics may include coalition building and community activism; LGBT+ movements; ecofeminism; women's health, sexuality, and reproductive justice; gender and economic development; refugee and migrant women in transition; gender and workplace transformation; women as change agents; third wave feminism; social media and activism; pedagogies of empowerment; service-learning and student activism.

Proposals from all disciplines are welcome.

We welcome a variety of presentation formats, such as individual paper presentations, panel sessions, roundtable discussions, performances, short films, and posters. Presentations will be limited to 15 minutes, to be followed by questions and discussion. All proposals should meet the following criteria:

- 250-500 word presentation abstract in a Word document (for panel submissions, provide a description of the panel and of each individual presentation)
- One-page bio
- Equipment request. Please be specific.

DEADLINE: Proposals must be submitted by December 15, 2016

Email proposals to: womenstu@mtsu.edu

For conference information, please go to <http://www.mtsu.edu/womenstu/conference> or contact us at 615-898-5910.