Opening Conference Keynote Presentation

A Blessing in Disguise
Mr. Gordon Reynolds

Do not let things define who you are because that is not living, it is just existing. I was born with Cerebral Palsy that did not affect me until 2013 so I understand the adversity from being able to do everything to now being in a wheelchair. In actuality, I believe that this was the best thing that ever happened to me. I will share my story and hope to impact someone who has a disability or someone who is just going through adversity. My focus is showing everyone that everything we go through in life is for a reason and we must find the positive no matter what life throws our way. Life is such a blessing and it is truly what you make of it.

75 Minute Workshop Presentation

Accentuating Abilities over DisAbilities: A positive interaction
Dr. Yuleinys Castillo, SFASU Assistant Professor of Human Services
Ms. Shannon Johnson, SFASU Graduate Student
Ms. Christina Meyers, SFASU Undergraduate Student

Our strengths and abilities make us unique. Identifying and embracing individual traits can help increase awareness and participation of people with disabilities. Let’s recognize and challenge everyday misconceptions about disability. Having adequate knowledge and a welcoming attitude can help to improve our interactions with people with disabilities while promoting inclusion.

African American Women and Self-Esteem: Age, Family, and Current Life Circumstances
Dr. Nina Ellis-Hervey, SFASU Assistant Professor and Director of School Psychology Assessment Center
Mrs. Ashley Doss, SFASU Graduate Student
Ms. DeShae Davis, SFASU Graduate Student
Mainstream media typically highlights a positive relationship between life circumstances and how individuals feel about themselves, regardless of racial/ethnic group affiliation. African-American women consistently report experiences of racism and sexism more than any other racial group. This inconsistency warrants examining how factors influence self-esteem among African-American women in the U.S.

**Experiencing Poverty to Facilitate Discussion and Action for our Students**  
*Dr. Lauren Burrow, Assistant Professor of Elementary Education*

This workshop is an interactive dialogue about poverty and its effects on higher education learning. Outcomes of the session include: awareness, advocacy, and action. Attendees will participate in a brief poverty simulation, selected readings, and videos in order to actively discuss ideas for best practices in assisting learners’ experiencing poverty.

**Texas Educational Institutions Policy: Examination of Transgender Inclusion Policies at Texas Schools**  
*M. Josephine Tittsworth, Executive Director, Texas Transgender Nondiscrimination Summit  
Nikki Vogel, Texas Transgender Nondiscrimination Summit*

An examination of current university, college, and public schools policies related to transgender inclusion for students, faculty, and staff and a discussion on the aspects of Title IX that impact our schools and higher academic institutions for transgenders.

**50 Minute Standard Presentation**

**Does Ethnicity matters in Religious Activities**  
*Dr. Hyunsook Kang, SFASU Assistant Professor of Human Sciences*

This study examines the relationships among race and religious activities among older adults. Frequency of religious service attendance and ethnicity will be measured in the current study. Data from the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP) survey (Waite et al., 2015) were used. The NSHAP study sampled persons 57-85 years of age (n=3005). It was hypothesized that older adults’ ethnicity differentially influenced religious activities. African American and Hispanic older adults were hypothesized to have higher frequency of religious activities than Anglo older adults. In order to identify the associations between race and frequency of religious activities, multiple regression analyses were used.
Religious Identity and Spiritual Maturity
Mr. Frank Gomez, SFASU Doctoral Student

Previous researchers identified strong relationships between identity and religiosity/spirituality. The purpose of this study was to investigate the link between religious identity and spiritual maturity to determine categorical similarities. Results indicated the achieved identity status was categorically different from the growth-oriented spiritual type and similar to the dogmatic spiritual type.

Work Issues and Transgender Employee Rights
Dr. Dianne Dentice, SFASU Associate Professor of Sociology

This presentation is based on field work with transgender employees in both the private sector and the military. Findings indicate that transgender individuals are less likely to be hired than their non-trans counterparts. If hired, they are less likely to be promoted than their non-trans counterparts. They are also more likely to be fired - especially if they elect to transition on the job.

25 Minute Paired Session Presentation

An Evaluation of First Generation College Student Athletes: Implications for Academic Planning and Student Success
Mrs. Brittany Fish, SFASU Academic Advisor
Mr. Robert McDermand, SFASU Assistant Athletic Director
Mrs. Katherine Whitbeck, Nacogdoches High School Teacher

This quantitative study analyzed admission data of 603 first year, first-time undergraduate student-athletes enrolled at Stephen F. Austin State University. The purpose of the study was to identify risk factors associated with academic success and retention of first year, first generation student-athletes in comparison to first year, non-first generation student-athletes.

Connections, Experiences, Opportunities, and Support to Improve Visibility of Persons with Disabilities
Mrs. Heather Munro, Instructor of Human Services (Visual Impairment and Orientation & Mobility) Mr. Michael Munro, Instructor of Human Services (Visual Impairment and Orientation & Mobility) Ms. Laura Poynor, SFASU Undergraduate Student
Mr. Trenton Rowland, SFASU Undergraduate Student
This presentation details campus activities that are used/proposed to support SFA students with disabilities, to connect these students to the student body, develop community through student clubs focused on disability, create connections with programs and agencies, and use the campus community to support families and children in the Nacogdoches area.

**Diversity in STEM**

*Dr. Jennifer Gumm, SFASU Assistant Professor of Biology*

This presentation will highlight data documenting the lack of diversity in STEM fields, explore underlying causes for the lack of diversity in STEM fields, and provide a framework of action that can result in increased diversity in STEM fields.

**Engaging Diversity and Creating a Safe Environment in the Classroom**

*Dr. Kara Lopez, SFASU Assistant Professor of Social Work*

*Dr. James Morris, SFASU Assistant Professor of Social Work*

*Ms. Kristin Wallace, SFASU Assistant Professor of Social Work*

As higher education becomes increasingly diverse, it is necessary for educators and students alike to gain knowledge, values, and skills regarding multiculturalism. Information will be presented on best practices that can be implemented to engage diverse populations in a safe and supportive classroom environment.

**Ethics & Alterity: Levinas, the Other, and Ubuntu**

*Mr. Jae Jerkins, Tyler Junior College Professor, Philosophy and Religion*

Levinas’ theories promotes a possibility, just short of a promise perhaps, and Ubuntu is the enacting of that promise; a promise that says the face of the Other matters, that conversation is always ethical, and that reconciliation with the Other—even forgiveness—is possible because of this.

**Hidden Faces: Race Relationships Communication across the Life Span**

*Dr. Jim Towns, SFASU Professor of Communication*

This study focuses on a tragedy in American culture. It depicts African-American relations and will discuss an individual’s journey through the dragging death of James Byrd, Jr. in the East Texas community of Jasper. No one is born prejudiced. Prejudices are learned, but they can also be unlearned.

**Hidden in Plain Sight: People of Color in the Outdoors**
Dr. Shelby Laird, SFASU Assistant Professor of Forestry and Agriculture  
Ms. Diana Chavez, SFASU Undergraduate Student  
Ms. Jade Buckley, SFASU Undergraduate Student

It is a widely assumed myth that people of color do not engage with the natural world. This presentation explores how people of color are hidden by the media and current efforts by various folks to bring people of color exploring nature to light.

Hidden Stories in the Public Sphere  
Dr. Louise Stoehr, SFASU Associate Professor, German

Obvious reminders of Germany’s difficult history are ubiquitous. Less obvious are public displays representing common people whose individual acts are easily forgotten. This type of commemoration is in unlikely places and therefore likely to be overlooked. This presentation introduces four stories of revealing the hidden faces integrated into the modern German cityscape.

Influence of Hair on Professionalism, Likability & Appearance  
Ms. Deinisha Tryals, SFASU Undergraduate Student  
Dr. Lauren Brewer, SFASU Assistant Professor of Psychology

For this study, the researchers were interested in how another culturally relevant variable, hair texture (natural versus processed), affected people’s perceptions of Black women’s professionalism, appearance, and likability. Historically, Black women have processed their hair to make it look similar to White women’s hair. Natural hair, however, is growing in popularity in Black communities and is likely to be worn by new job applicants. We found hair type by race interactions: Black women with natural rather than processed hair were viewed as more professional, having a nice appearance, and likable when rated by Black rather than White participants.

Students' Perceptions of Transwomen  
Mx. Elizabeth Peavy, SFASU Undergraduate Student  
Dr. Lauren Brewer, SFASU Assistant Professor of Psychology

As the transgender community continues to grow, trans issues also continue to be hotly debated. Little research explores what cisgender people think about their transgender peers. This study focused on perceptions of transwomen in order to gauge college student’s perceptions of their transgender peers.