



SSRC
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY®

A RESEARCH ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE DIVISION OF
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

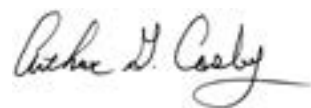
This year the Social Science Research Center completes its 64th year as a university-level research center at Mississippi State. The Center has a long and proud tradition as a location for meaningful social science research for scholars on our campus and beyond. Its origins can be traced to the Social Science Round Table that began meeting shortly after World War II. This body's goal was to promote research in sociology, history, economics, political science and other related disciplines that participated in the forum. Its signal contribution was to advocate for the creation of a research organization to facilitate social science research on campus. From their vision and efforts grew the Social Science Research Center, which was formally recognized in 1950 as the first campus-wide research enterprise. The Center, from its origin, has emphasized interdisciplinary research and the application of social science knowledge to the most critical problems facing the state, region and nation. The number of disciplines participating in the center has grown to include psychology, business, social work, public administration, anthropology, communication, public relations, law, public health and computer science. Because it is an interdisciplinary entity, it is not uncommon to find projects that blend the social sciences with agriculture, engineering, medicine and education here.

The Social Science Research Center has become a place for scientists from other institutions to come and conduct research, study and participate in the special environment of the Center. Collaboration across disciplines, across institutions and even across nations is an essential feature of the Center's strategy of development. This strategy markedly expands the capacity of the Center's scientists to address the most difficult research questions. These collaborations invigorate and stimulate the intellectual dialogue in the Center and play a major role in shaping our organizational culture.

The Center has had a highly successful year that is reported only in part in this annual report. The level of productivity is reflected in numerous publications, reports and presentations. Our work is sponsored by numerous federal, a wide array of private foundations and strong backing from state agencies in Mississippi. We are humbled and appreciative of their fine support and strive to earn the trust they have in us by making such substantial investments. Our students, both graduate and undergraduate, are among the most talented and successful on campus and play a key role in our research endeavors. Our support staff is recognized campus-wide for its talent and ability to facilitate the conduct of faculty and student research.

My colleagues and I, are most appreciative of the support we receive from the leadership of Mississippi State University and are thankful for the opportunities that this fine institution has provided us.

Sincerely,



Arthur G. Cosby
William L. Giles Distinguished Professor and Director

SSRC ANNOUNCEMENT

About the SSRC	04
Organizational Structure	06
Publications	08
Maya McDoom, Ph.D. Feature	11
Surveys	12
Grants & Contracts	13
USAID Feature	18
Presentations	20
Gina Rico-Mendez Feature	27
Awards & Recognitions	28
On the Horizon	32
Special Collaborative Partnerships	34

ABOUT THE SSRC

The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) was established at Mississippi State University (MSU) in 1950 to promote, enhance and facilitate social science research and related scholarly activities. The Center is organized with university-wide responsibilities and reports to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development and the Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. The Center offers a superior research environment with an impressive array of research opportunities and options, state-of-the-art facilities, laboratories and support units that enhance and expand both the scope and quality of social science research. The SSRC fosters a rigorous and independent research environment to ensure objective, relevant and unbiased analyses.

The success of the SSRC relies primarily on the expertise, talents and entrepreneurial skills of its scientists. Individual scientists, or self-organized teams of researchers, provide the impetus and direction of funded research projects. They determine their research agendas and benefit from the SSRC facilities as they so choose. Research fellows and research associates, supported by an administrative staff and graduate and undergraduate research assistants, conduct both sponsored and unsponsored research projects. Funding for projects comes from a variety of sources including federal and state agencies, foundations, MSU units and other public and private entities. The SSRC research portfolio usually exceeds \$10 million a year.

Research issues facing social scientists are now so profoundly complex that their solutions demand the combined resources of multiple disciplines, multiple professions and multiple institutions. From its origin, the SSRC has had a strong interdisciplinary emphasis. Scientists from a number of disciplines, both on campus and off, come together in the SSRC to work on common research problems. It is the norm to find various combinations of such diverse disciplines as psychologists, business professors, sociologists, social workers, geographers, historians, economists and political scientists joining together to bring to bear their expertise on a given research problem.

The range of interdisciplinary involvement goes beyond the social sciences. The Center often becomes a place where social scientists team with colleagues from agriculture, engineering and other disciplines. The SSRC also forms partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborative agreements with entities such as state agencies, off-campus national-level research organizations and professional groups. These various interdisciplinary research enterprises provide a steady stream of innovative projects and creative investigations.

MISSION STATEMENT

The SSRC conducts research to explore social, economic, political, human resource and social-environmental problems facing the state, nation and world. Scientists strive to present findings to a variety of constituents in a meaningful way to improve the health, safety and well-being of all people.

SSRC FACILITIES

The SSRC currently occupies 22,051 square feet in the Mississippi Technology Center, located in the Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park. The Mississippi Health Policy Research Center (MPHC) changed the location of its office in October 2007 from the Paragon Centre in Ridgeland to the CAVS E building located in Canton. The MHPRC occupies 1,758 square feet. In addition to the core space at CAVS E, the SSRC has access to state-of-the-art conference and meeting facilities.

STATEMENT OF GOALS

The Social Science Research Center strives to be a center of excellence for social science research that serves the entire university community. This collective ambition is reflected in our institutional goals:

- To contribute to the University's graduate and undergraduate programs by involving students in research projects through assistantships and other work arrangements.
- To conduct rigorous, objective and unbiased research on relevant social, economic, political, human resource and social-environmental problems facing the state, nation and world.
- To provide a vehicle for unique social research and public service programs that do not fit more traditional academic structures.
- To provide a support system for the University to plan, develop, secure funding for and conduct social research on problems of interest to the scientific community and to consumers of research findings.
- To provide a mechanism whereby existing social science research capabilities in the University can be matched with funding sources.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) is purposely flat, with several internal research units, normally led by coordinators, reporting to the Director. Project directors operate with a great deal of autonomy and take full responsibility for the conduct of their projects.

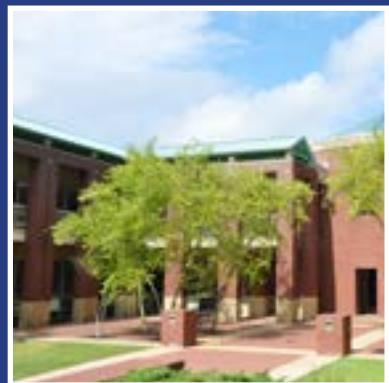
Over the years, the SSRC has developed strong working relationships with faculty members and administrators in the College of Arts & Sciences, the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, the College of Business and the College of Education. In addition, it has established strong linkages with outside funding sources, including federal and state agencies, research entities and foundations.

The research faculty members in the SSRC are the driving force for the Center's activities. Together, they define the Center's goals, develop research agendas, prepare and submit proposals and conduct research. The SSRC maintains a small staff of full-time research faculty to support ongoing research activities. These individuals are normally affiliated with an academic department. Other faculty members hold joint appointments on a continual basis between academic departments and the SSRC. A third category of faculty members works in the Center on a periodic basis, depending upon funding of a particular grant or contract, or is supported via summer appointments while developing research proposals. In order to facilitate the efforts of the research faculty, the SSRC seeks to maintain collegial, cooperative relationships with academic departments and other campus entities.

The Center maintains a core staff of experts to assist in the financial and personnel aspects of preparing, submitting and administering research grants and contracts, as well as individuals who manage specific Center programs, such as the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program (MASEP). Research associates and graduate and undergraduate assistants support research and administrative activities. In addition, the Center employs many individuals on an intermittent basis to serve the needs of the individual projects.

The continued success of the SSRC is clearly dependent upon the personnel who participate in its activities. Attracting bright, capable, energetic and entrepreneurial individuals and then encouraging their continued intellectual and professional growth is a key element in the SSRC organizational philosophy. By keeping bureaucratic requirements to a minimum, the SSRC seeks to create an environment that fosters, facilitates and enables innovative and creative research efforts.

"BY KEEPING BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS TO A MINIMUM, THE SSRC SEEKS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FOSTERS, FACILITATES AND ENABLES INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE RESEARCH EFFORTS."



PUBLICATIONS

Abernathy, T., Adams-Price, C., & Henley, T. (2013, December). Prescription drug advertisements and older adults: A case for implicit memory. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*, 7(4), 341-356.

Buffington, A., McCown, J., Walker, B. H., Richards, A. L., Rutland, S., & Blalock, L. (2014, April). *Telling the story: Exploring the impact and outreach of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation*. Evaluation sponsored by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

Buffington, A., McKee, C., Ragsdale, K., Blanchard, T., Baggett, D., & Southward, L. H. (2014). Impact of Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 on district- and school-level health policies: School officials' perspectives. *Journal of School Health*, 84(5), 285-293. DOI: 10.1111/josh.12152

Cheng, K. W., Okechukwu, C. A., McMillen, R., & Glantz, S. A. (2013). Association between clean indoor air laws and voluntary smokefree rules in homes and cars. *Tobacco Control*. DOI:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2013-051121.

Dr. Ronald E. Cossman served as co-editor of the National AHEC Organization's special issue, "AHECs Successfully Adapting to Meet the Nation's Healthcare Needs Through Interprofessional Education." 30, Spring 2014.

Cossman, R. E., Cossman, J. S., & Mason, P. B. (Forthcoming). Demographic attributes of Mississippi nursing students and family influences. *The Changing Face of Applied Demography in the 21st Century*. Edited by Nazrul Hoque and Lloyd Potter. Springer.

Cossman, R. E., Cossman, J. S., Rogers, S., McBride, D., Sutton, L., & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (Forthcoming). Access to primary care physicians differs by health insurance in Mississippi. *Southern Medical Journal*, 107(2): 87-90.

Cossman, R. E. (invited submission, under review). Rurality not the determinant of access to primary health care in Mississippi. *The Changing Face of Applied Demography in the 21st Century*. Edited by Nazrul Hoque and Lloyd Potter. Springer.

Cossman, R. E., Williams, R., Hunt, B., Fratesi, C., Slinkard, S., & Day, T. (2013) "College students' sense of cycling capability deters helmet use implications for safety helmet ordinances." *American Journal of Health Sciences*. 4(2):51-54.

DiFranza, J., Wellman, R., Savageau, J. A., Beccia, A., Ursprung, S., & McMillen, R. (2013). What aspect of dependence does the fagerstrom test for nicotine dependence measure? *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*. DOI: 10.1155/2013/906276. Available at <http://www.hindawi.com/isrn/addiction/2013/906276/>. **(Impact Factor: 2.09)**.

James, W., Cossman, R. E., & Feierabend, N. (2014). Integrating spatial and time sensitive data to monitor social patterns: A dynamic methodology for studying social issue. *Journal of Maps Special Issue: Innovative Mapping and Spatial Demography*, 10(2), (online journal). Retrieved from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17445647.2013.866910>

Keith, W. J., & Robertson, A. A. (2014). Factors affecting MASEP enrollment. White paper produced for the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program.

McKee, C., Ragsdale, K., & Southward, L. H. (2014). What do parents in Mississippi really think about sex education in school?: Results of a state-wide survey. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice*, 7 (1, Special Issue): 97-119.

McMillen, R., Winickoff, J., Wilson, K., Tanski, S., & Klein, J. (2013). A dual-frame methodology to address landline replacement in tobacco control research. *Tobacco Control*. Online First: DOI: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2012-05072. **(Impact Factor: 3.85)**.

Nilson, A., & Cossman, R. E. (2014) It's worse than we thought - Landline RDD unreachable young adults in a college town. *Survey Practice*. 7(1). Retrieved from: <http://surveypractice.org/index.php/SurveyPractice/article/view/269/pdf>

O'Halloran, A., Hu, S., Malarcher, A., McMillen, R., Valentine, N., Moore, M., Reid, J., Darlin, N., & Gerzoff, R. (2014). Response order effects in the Youth Tobacco Survey: Results of a split-ballot experiment. *Survey Practice*, 7, ISSN 2168-0094.

Parrish, D., Coleman, C., Higdon, C., & McNeil, M. (2014). 2013 Seat Belt and Motorcycle Helmet Survey. Report produced for the Mississippi Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

Patwardhan, P., McMillen, R., & Winickoff, J. (2013). Consumer perceptions of the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies and grocery stores among U.S. adults. *BMC Research Notes*, 6(26), DOI:10.1186/1756-0500-6-261.

Pilkinton, M. W., Robertson, A. A., & McCluskey, D. L. (2013). Drugged driving: Increased traffic risks involving licit and illicit substances. *Journal of Drug Education*, 43(2): 183-201, DOI: 10.2190/DE.43.2.f

Radin, D. (2013). Effect of EU membership on health care systems of member countries of Central and Eastern Europe. *Croatian Political Science Review*, 50(5), 144-154.

Radin, D. (2013). Does corruption undermine trust in health care? Results from public opinion polls in Croatia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 98: 46-53.

Ragsdale, K., Bersamin, M., Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Kerrick, M. R., & Grube, J. W. (2013). Development of sexual expectancies among adolescents with no prior sexual intercourse experience: Contributions by parents, peers and the media. *Journal of Sex Research*, 0(0), 1-10. DOI: 10.1080/00224499.2012.753025

Rich, L., Robertson, A. A., & Wilson, J. K. (2014). Having "The Talk": Individual, family and partner factors on unprotected sex among female adolescent offenders. *Deviant Behavior*, 35:4, 311-322, DOI: 10.1080/01639625.2013.848117

Sinclair, H. C., Hood, K. B., & Wright, B. L. (2014). Revisiting the Romeo and Juliet effect (Driscoll, Davis, & Lipetz, 1972). *Social Psychology*, 45(3): 170-178.

PUBLICATIONS

Southward, L. H., Buffington, A., Long, L., McCown, J., & Walker, B. H. (2013, November). READY or NOT: Mississippi kindergarten teachers reveal the “state” of school readiness. Issue Brief for *Mississippi KIDS COUNT*. Available at Mississippi KIDS COUNT website: http://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/KindergartenBooklet_Final_WEB-1.pdf

Southward, L. H., Buffington, A., McCown, J., McKee, C., & Walker, B. H. (2014). 2014 KIDS COUNT fact book. Annual data book sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available at Mississippi KIDS COUNT website: <http://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/data/mississippi-kids-count/ms-data/books>

Taras, V., Rikka, S. Muchinsky, P., Kemmelmeier, M., Singelis, T. M., Avsec, H. M., & Sinclair, H.C. (2013). Opposite ends of the same stick? Multi-method test of dimensionality of individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 20(10), 1-33, DOI: 10.1177/0022022113509132

Walker, B. H., Sinclair, H. C., & MacArthur, J. (2014). Social norms versus social motives: The effects of social influence and motivation to control prejudiced reactions on the expression of prejudice. *Social Influence*. DOI: 10.1080/15534510.2014.904247.

Wilson, K. M., Torok, M., McMillen, R., Tanskin, S., Klein, J. D., & Winickoff, J. P. (2014). Tobacco smoke incursions in multi-unit housing. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104, 1445-1453, 10.2105/AJPH.2014.301878. **(Impact Factor: 3.93)**

MAYA MCDOOM, PH.D.

After earning her Ph.D. from Boston University, Dr. Maya McDoom came to the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) with a passion for public health. A Gates Millennium Fellow, McDoom hopes that through her work at the SSRC, she will have a tangible impact on the people in Mississippi.

McDoom was introduced to the SSRC by previous Delta Fellow Nate Roseburg. She arrived at the SSRC in January 2014 as the MS Public Health Fellow and holds a joint Post Doctoral Fellowship from Harvard School of Public Health and the SSRC.

During her short time here at the SSRC, McDoom has had the opportunity to work with many different researchers on a number of projects.

“Dr. Angela Robertson, Dr. Connie Baird-Thomas and I wrote a proposal to evaluate the reach, impact and outcomes of the Delta Health Collaborative (DHC),” said McDoom.

The DHC is a five-year community-based and clinical intervention that aims to enact policy and environmental systems change to prevent the increase of heart disease and strokes in the Mississippi Delta.

McDoom has also been a part of a project designed to help enhance and redesign the Mississippi Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.



Dr. McDoom works to identify ways to improve public health in Mississippi.

“I am currently looking at the economic impact of rural hospital closure in Mississippi and collaborating with Drs. David Mirvis, John Gnuschke and Cyril Chang, who are health economists and labor economists at the University of Memphis,” McDoom said. “We just got funding and are gearing up for that.”

In the brief time that McDoom has been at the SSRC she has received multiple awards and notable recognitions from the research community.

McDoom was selected to be a participant at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Connections Eighth Annual Symposium this past summer. This is an invitation-only symposium aimed at enhancing the skill sets of participants and enabling early to midcareer researchers to network, share research ideas and hear from senior researchers and mentors.

McDoom was also selected to be on the President’s Council of the Status of Women, which focuses on women’s issues at Mississippi State and the surrounding communities.

“I look forward to being more involved in [the Council] and talking about issues that are relevant to women on campus,” stated McDoom.

When McDoom is not hard at work at the SSRC, she enjoys traveling around the state of Mississippi and spending time with her family.



Maya McDoom, Ph.D.

by Mallory Cadenhead

SURVEYS

Delta Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control - Mississippi State Department of Health.

MSU Extension Service Brand Awareness Survey - Mississippi State University Extension Service.

2013 Food Environment Survey of Orleans Parish, Louisiana - Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

The 2013 National Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control - American Academy of Pediatrics.

The 2013 Mississippi Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control - Mississippi State Department of Health.

2014 Health and Wellbeing of Northeast Mississippians - North Mississippi Medical Center.

Mississippi Needs Assessment Survey - Mississippi State University Extension Service.

2014 Natural Resource Enterprises Landowner Survey - Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Mississippi State University.

2014 Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation Client Survey - Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services.

2014 Human Capital: Enhancing the Academic Achievement of Students of Color Survey - Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, Mississippi State University.

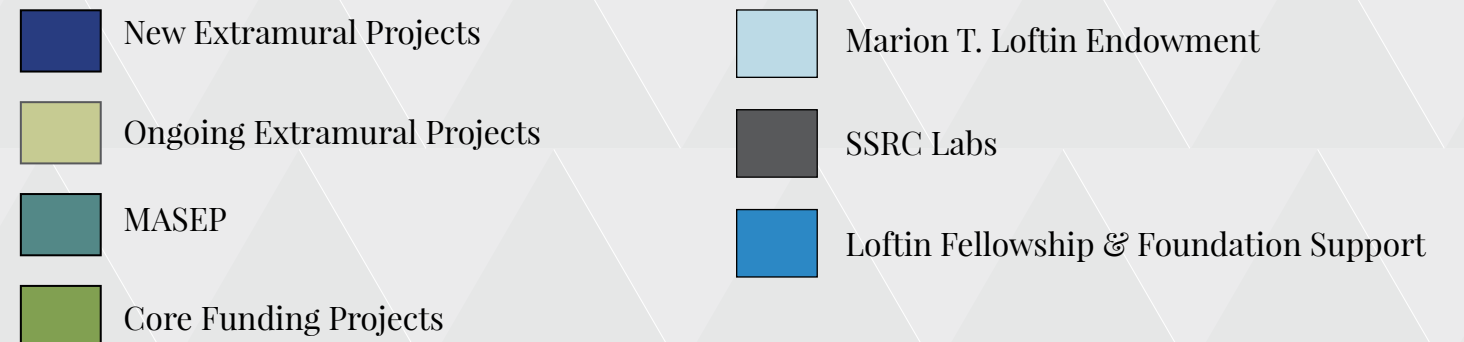
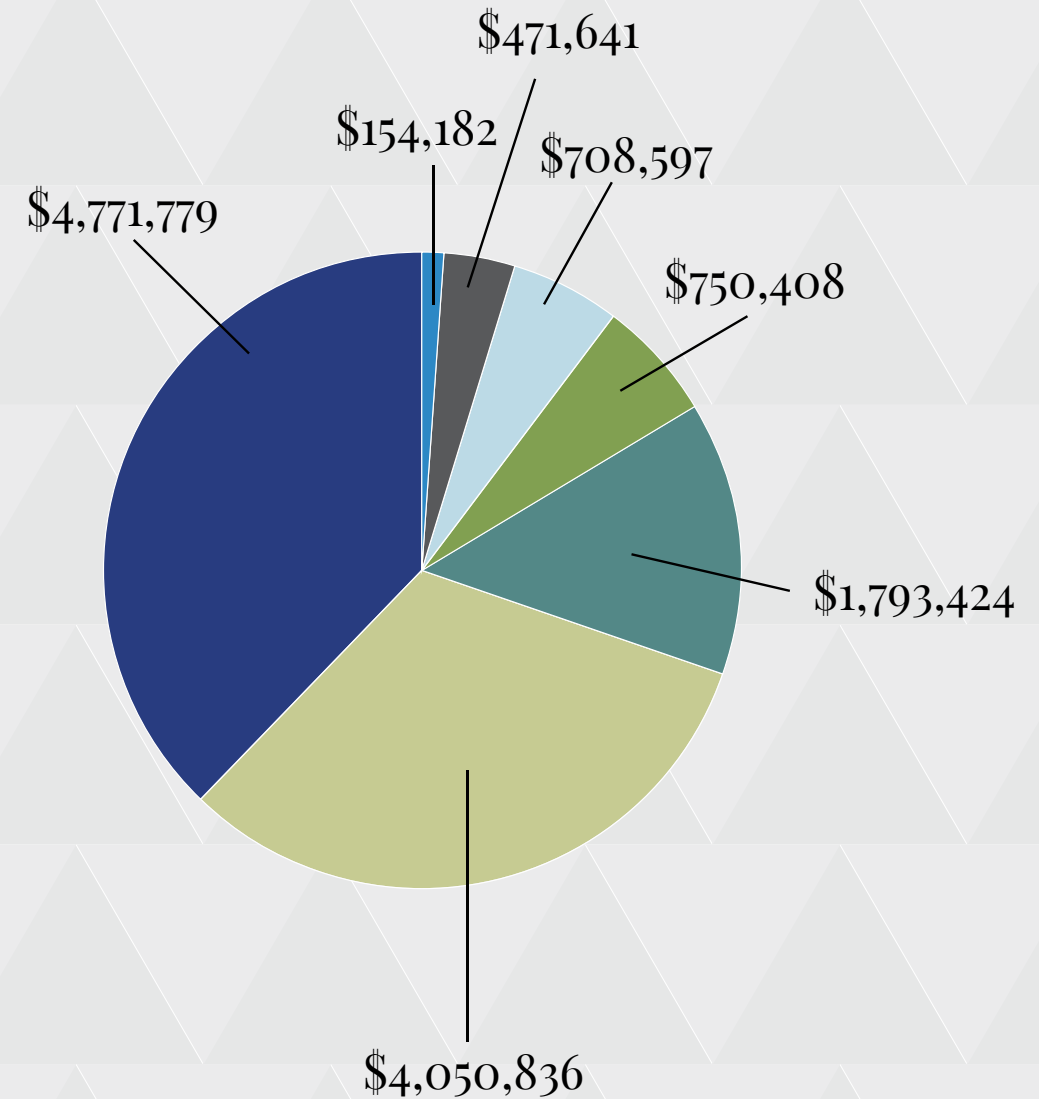
2014 Broadband Technology Outreach Program - Office of the Governor of Mississippi and Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Diabetes Survey - Mississippi Public Health Institute.

National Survey of District Attorneys - Department of Sociology and Social Science Research Center.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Total Funding: \$12,700,867



GRANTS & CONTRACTS

NEW:

Baird-Thomas, C. (2013, September). "Affordable Care Act Implementation Project Evaluation Year II," Mississippi Health Advocacy Program.

Buffington, A. (2013, November). "William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation Evaluation Project," William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

Cosby, A. (2013, August). "Delta Fellow," The Winokur Family Foundation.

Cosby, A. (2013, July). "MAFES/SMTAS," MAFES.

Cross, G. (2013, September). "Partnerships to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for Children and Communities, Year 3," National Institutes of Health.

Cross, G. (2013, October). "Mississippi Electronic Citation, Year 5," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

Edwards, J., Mohanty, S., & Fitzgerald, P. (2014, January). "Assessment of Social Media Usage During Severe Weather Events and the Development of Twitter-based Model for Improved Communication of Storm-related Information," Connecticut Sea Grant, NOAA.

Hanna, H. (2013, October). "Assessing FWS Employees Attitudes and Beliefs Toward the Strategic Habitat Conservation Model," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hanna, H. (2014, May). "Assessing FWS Employees Attitudes and Beliefs Toward the Strategic Habitat Conservation Model," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Henderson, B. (2013, October). "Law Enforcement Training Logistics," Office of Highway Safety/Public Safety, NHTSA.

Henderson, B. (2013, October). "Police Traffic Services," Office of Highway Safety/Public Safety, NHTSA.

Mathews, R. (2014, January). "Evaluation for MSDH Oral Health 2," Mississippi State Department of Health.

McDoom, M. (2014, January). "Delta Public Health Fellow," Harvard School of Public Health.

McDoom, M. (2014, June). "The Economic and Health Implications of Hospital Closure in Rural Mississippi Communities," MAFES Administration.

McDoom, M. (2014, June). "The Economic Implications of Hospital Closure in Rural Mississippi Communities," Center for Mississippi Health Policy.

McKee, C., & Chi, G., (2013, October). "Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory, Year 6," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

McMillen, D. L. (2013, July). "Pathfinder, Year 16," Office of the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. (2013, July). "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," Mississippi State Department of Health.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

McMillen, R. (2013, July). "Richmond Center of Excellence Data Sets," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

McMillen, R. (2013, August). "MS Public Health Institute," Mississippi Public Health Institute, Bristol-Meyers Squibb Foundation.

Parrish, D. (2013, October). "The Seat Belt, Motorcycle Helmet, and Child Restraint Observational Survey Point, Year 21," Mississippi Governor's Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

Parrish, D. (2014, January). "A Comprehensive Approach Toward Commercial Motor Vehicle Data Quality Improvement: Phase I," Department of Public Safety, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Ragsdale, K. (2013, November). "eBaby: Research group: Enhanced Early Infant Feeding and Care Among Teen/Young Mothers," Office of Research & Economic Development (ORED).

Ragsdale, K., & Buffington, A. (2013, August). "Community College Completion Project," Women's Fund of Mississippi.

Ragsdale, K., & Peterson, L. (2013, November). "USAID Soy Project," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S. Agency for International Development.

Robertson, A. (2013, July). "Mississippi TRIALS Research Center," National Institutes of Health.

Robertson, A. (2014, June). "Adams County Alternatives to Detention Project," Adams County Youth Court.

Southward, L. (2013, July). "Mississippi's Childhood Obesity: An In-depth Analysis of Contextual Domains," Center for MS Health Policy, The Bower Foundation.

Southward, L. (2013, December). "Mississippi Children & Families Kellogg Data Project," W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Southward, L. (2014, January). "Mississippi KIDS COUNT," Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT.

Southward, L. (2014, March). "Mississippi Medicaid Data Project," Division of Medicaid, State of Mississippi.

Valentine, N. (2013, July). "2013-2014 Mississippi Youth Tobacco Survey," Mississippi Department of Health.

Walker, B. H. (2014, January). "Healthy Partnership Grant," Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.

ONGOING:

Cosby, A. G. (2012, July). "SSRC/Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Administrative Account," Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

Cosby, A. (2012, August). "Innovative Data Laboratory," Self-Generated Funds.

Cossmann, R. E. (2012, July). "Examining the Spatial Patterns of Complex Social Issues," Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Cossman, R. E. (2012, August). "Building Health-Related Grant Writing Capacity," Mississippi Department of Health.

Cossman, R. E. (2012, December). "MS Dentist Manpower Survey," Mississippi Department of Health, Office of Rural Health.

Cross, G. W. (2013, July). "Family and Children Research Initiative, Year 10," Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

Cross, G. (2012, September). "Partnerships to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for Children and Communities, Year 2," National Institutes of Health.

Cross, G., & Myers, L. (2012, October). "DUI Implementation," Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Edwards, J. (2012, July). "Survey Research Support Project 6," Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Mississippi State University.

Henderson, B. (2012, October). "DUI Enforcement, Year 20," Public Safety Planning/Office of Highway Safety, U.S. Department of Transportation.

Mathews, R. (2013, January). "Evaluation for HIV State Services, Part 3," Mississippi Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

Mathews, R. (2013, May). "Evaluation for MSDH Oral Health," Mississippi State Department of Health, DentaQuest Foundation.

McClellan, K. (2013, February). "K. McClellan Support."

McKee, C. (2013, April). "Mississippi Project Fit America Phase II Evaluation," Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.

McMillen, D. L. (2012, July). "Pathfinder, Year 15," Office of the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. (2012, July). "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," Mississippi State Department of Health.

McMillen, R. (2012, July). "Richmond Center of Excellence Date Sets, Year 2," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

McMillen, R. (2012, October). "2012 Community Health Assessment," North Mississippi Medical Center.

McMillen, R. (2012, October). "Air Quality Assessment," American Lung Association of the Plains, American Nonsmokers' Rights.

McMillen, R. (2012, November). "Project Change," My Brothers Keeper, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Myers, L., & Cross, G. (2012, October). "Mississippi Electronic Citation Implementation," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

Parrish, D. (2012, October). "Seat Belt/Motorcycle Helmet and Children Restraint Surveys, Year 20," Mississippi Governor's Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

Ragsdale, K. (2012, July). "Health Works Evaluation, Year 6," Health Care Foundation of North Mississippi.

Ragsdale, K. (2012, July). "Midtown Teen Wellness Clinic-Outcomes Evaluation Project," Women's Fund of Mississippi.

Ragsdale, K., & Walton, L. R. (2012, September). "Enhancing Early Infant Feeding (EIF) Practices Among Low-Income First-time Teen/Young Mothers Through New/Social Media (eBaby Project)," USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Ragsdale, K., & Walton, L. R. (2013, May). "eBaby Project: Phase II - Early Infant Feeding Disparities Among Rural Low-Income Young Mothers," MAFES, Mississippi State University.

Robertson, A. (2012, July). "MASEP R&D."

Robertson, A. (2013, April). "JDAI Data Collection Analysis," Mississippi Attorney General's Office.

Schewe, R. (2013, February). "An Integrated Milk Quality Extension and Education Program to Reduce Mastitis and Antimicrobial Use," Michigan State University, USDA.

Southward, L. H. (2013, January). "Evaluation of the Impact of the Mississippi Healthy Student Acts on Childhood Obesity," Center for Mississippi Health Policy, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Southward, L. H., & Baird-Thomas, C. (2012, December). "Mississippi Children & Families Kellogg Data Project," W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Southward, L. (2013, January). "Mississippi KIDS COUNT," Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Thornton-Neaves, T., Cosby, A., & Chi, G. (2012, October). "Public Safety Data Laboratory, Year 5," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, NHTSA.

Thornton-Neaves, T. (2013, January). "MAFES Civil Rights Review," MAFES.

Valentine, N., & McMillen, R. (2012, July). "2012-2013 Mississippi Youth Tobacco Survey," Mississippi State Department of Health.

Walton, L. (2012, July). "Media Collaboration Laboratory."



USAID

KATHLEEN RAGSDALE, PH.D. & LINDSEY PETERSON, PH.D.

Drs. Kathleen Ragsdale and Lindsey Peterson’s research initiatives span two continents. Ragsdale and Peterson are Co-Principle Investigators (Co-PIs) on a five-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide the science necessary for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa to share in rising demand for soy. The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research Soybean Innovation Lab project is being conducted in Ghana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Ethiopia.

According to the Feed the Future website, “USAID is helping thousands of vulnerable households improve their food security by adopting more productive agriculture technologies, improving nutrition and health and connecting farmers to markets.”

Towards this goal, Ragsdale

and Peterson are conducting research to better understand gender and economic empowerment to improve soy productivity among smallholder farming families in Ghana and Mozambique, with the goal of expanding their economic opportunities. As the global economy extends into even the most remote and traditional villages worldwide, having access to and control over income is increasingly important for both women and men.

The significant role that agriculture plays in the economies of both Ghana and Mozambique highlights the importance of collecting systematic data on farming activities among each country’s rural poor. In Ghana, the agricultural sector accounts for one-quarter of the country’s GDP and employs over 50 percent of the labor force—most of whom are smallholder farmers like those in the rural

villages where Ragsdale and Peterson are collecting data.

“Farming traditions and cultural norms are informing what farmers are doing in the village, on the ground,” Ragsdale explained. “One of the things we noticed in Ghana was that women farmers had access to land, but they are required to work on their land, plus work on their husband’s land,” Ragsdale said.

In order to better understand how norms and traditions impact women’s and men’s farming activities and day-to-day lives, Ragsdale and Peterson adapted the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to collect data among men and women farmers within their households and across their communities using the WEAI+ Survey.

During frequent trips to Africa, Ragsdale and Peterson work

with their in-country partners to administer the WEAI+ survey to rural smallholder farmers. The WEAI+ survey is designed to gather information on the different types of agricultural activities in which farmers engage, decision-making about these activities, control over the income these activities generate, and leadership and influence in their communities—such as individual’s engagement in local farmers’ associations.

“We know from previous studies that understanding the social, economic and cultural realities of farmers and their families is as important as demonstrating and providing new agricultural technologies or practices. That’s what we are trying to uncover through our work, so that the rest of the research team is able to provide the best agricultural interventions possible,” said Peterson.

Ragsdale and Peterson hope this project will help researchers, policymakers, and others engaged in global development gain a better understanding of barriers to improved soy productivity among rural smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa—such as how extreme rurality and lack of infrastructure can impact market access.

Each trip to Africa has been an exciting new adventure for these researchers. Although often faced with significant technological and environmental challenges during fieldwork—such as frequent power outages and flooded roads—Ragsdale and Peterson have also had the privilege of many once-in-a-lifetime experiences during their fieldwork. A highlight for Ragsdale was being treated to TZ (pronounced ‘tee-zed’) served with spicy okro soup under a massive ancient baobab tree in

a village in Ghana’s Northern Region. A highlight for Peterson was teaching a large group of children in one of the surveyed villages the traditional American children’s song “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes,” with the accompanying movements, and then seeing them perform one of their traditional songs and dances.

They have also had the privilege of working side-by-side with dedicated in-country partners, meeting local chiefs and village dignitaries, experiencing first-hand the generosity of rural villagers who have welcomed them to their communities and learning to say tapaya (thank you) in several local dialects.

“You never really know what to expect. We learned to just roll with the punches,” said Ragsdale.

by Mallory Cadenhead

All photos courtesy of Lindsey Peterson, Ph.D.

PRESENTATIONS

Baird-Thomas, C., & Southward, L. H. (2014, April). *Incorporating an evaluation plan into program design: Focus on qualitative research*. Invited oral presentation for the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers; Positioned for Progress Conference, Jackson, MS.

Buffington, A. (2013, October). *Storytelling as organizational practice*. Plenary presented at annual Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Communications Institute, Nashville, TN.

Buffington, A. (2014, February). *Growing legislative champions*. Presented at Annie. E. Casey Foundation's convening of 13 invited KIDS COUNT grantees, Baltimore, MD.

Ms. Anne Buffington presented the findings from the *Community College Completion Project* at a town hall meeting in Jackson, MS, on June 4. The event was sponsored by the Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Buffington, A., Aldy, L. A., & Brown, R. (2014, March). *Mississippi success stories: What we're doing right*. Presented at PREPS (Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools) and MAPE (Mississippi Association of Partners in Education) joint conference, Philadelphia, MS.

Carroll, R., McClelland, E., Dempewolf, M., Loden, K., Valentine, N., & McMillen, R. (2013, September). *Smoker susceptibility and smoking status among employed and unemployed high school students*. Presented at Annual Mississippi Public Health Association Conference, Jackson, MS.

Carroll, R., McClelland, E., Valentine, N., & McMillen, R. (2013, November). *Get a job and increase your risk for smoking? Current cigarette smoking status and employment among high school students*. Poster presented at the Annual Conference of the Society of Southeastern Social Psychologists, Augusta, GA.

Dr. Arthur Cosby, William L. Giles Distinguished Professor and Director of the Social Science Research Center, and Dr. Somya Mohanty, Data Scientist and System Architect of the Social Media Tracking and Analysis Software (SMTAS), participated in a webinar hosted by the National Weather Service (NWS) on July 16. Their presentation, entitled "*Utilizing Social Media to Understand Human Interaction with Extreme Media Events: The Hurricane Sandy Beta Test*," highlighted a recent project in which SMTAS was used to collect and analyze Twitter data related to the recent hurricane.

Cossman, R. E. (2013, March). *The evolution of health care: What does a modern health workforce look like? Mississippi's health, Mississippi's future*. University of Southern Mississippi College of Health 2013 Spring Forum Series, Hattiesburg, MS.

Cossman, R. E. (2013, April). *Age-specific net migration patterns for U.S. counties, 1950-2010*. Population Association of America, New Orleans, LA.

Cossman, R. E. (2013, August). *Black Rock: A city of front porches*. Presented at TEDxBlackRockCity hosted by Play)A(Skool at Burning Man, Black Rock Desert, NV.

PRESENTATIONS

Cossman, R. E. (2013, October). *Empowering community groups for a healthy Mississippi*. Mississippi Bike Summit, Jackson, MS.

Cossman, R. E. (2014, January). *Rurality not the determinant of access to primary health care in Mississippi*. Applied Demography Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Cross, G. (2014, May). *Partnerships to promote healthy lifestyles for children and communities*. Invited presentation for an "Early STEM" breakout session at the National Institutes of Health's 2014 Sci Ed Conference, Bethesda, MD.

Cross, G., & Miley, R. (2013, September). *Mississippi eCitation*. Presented at the Mississippi Office of Highway Safety's Safety Training and Recognition Symposium (STARS), Olive Branch, MS.

Cross, G., Miley, R., & Gallman, S. (2013, September). *The Mississippi eCitation project*. Presented at the Statewide Seminar for Mississippi Municipal Court Clerks, Jackson, MS.

Cross, G., Parker, J., Hall, S., Loden, D., Gallman, S., & Long, L. (2014, May). *Partnerships to promote healthy lifestyles for children and communities*. Poster presented at the National Institutes of Health's 2014 Sci Ed Conference, Bethesda, MD.

Gardner, S. (2013, August). *Still the tragic mulatto multiraciality in magazine media*. Presented at the Media Sociology Pre-Conference, New York City, NY.

Hall, S. K., Cross, G., & Walton, L. R. (2013, September). *Communicating children's health information through parents' preferred sources*. Poster presented at the Mississippi Public Health Association's Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.

Hancock, R., Cross, G., Myers, L., Miley, R., & Neaves, T. T. (2013, October). *Integrated traffic safety records systems in Mississippi*. International Forum on Traffic Records and Highway Systems, St. Paul, MN.

Hancock, R., Cross, G.W., Neaves, T., & Myers, L. (2013, October). *Integrated traffic safety records systems in Mississippi*. Presented at the 39th International Forum on Traffic Records and Highway Information Systems, St. Paul, MN.

Actor, author and humanitarian, Hill Harper presented "*Building a Foundation for your Life*" to over 3700 Mississippi high school students at the Metro Jackson College Fair on February 18, 2014. His appearance was coordinated by Mississippi KIDS COUNT which also served as sponsor of the event.

Keith, W., Cossman, R. E., & Cossman, J.S. (2014, May). *An analysis of migration as a spatially-dependent correlate of mortality*. Population Association of America, Boston, MA.

PRESENTATIONS

Keith, W., Cossman, R. E., Cossman, J. S. (2013, April). *Revisiting the dying to move or moving to die? Question: A parallel process model of migration-mortality trajectories mediated by elderly populations among United States counties*. Population Association of America, New Orleans, LA.

Keith, J. J., (2013, October). *Traffic density and risk of being pronounced dead-on-arrival: A study of U.S. counties*. Presented at the annual conference of the Southern Demographic Association, Montgomery, AL.

Louine, J. L., Stubbs-Richardson, M., & May, D. (2014, February). *Remembering Jonathan Ferrell: The common disregard of the black life*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Philadelphia, PA.

Ms. Rahel Mathews, presented “*HIV Care and Services Needs Assessment Survey Results*” to a statewide committee of doctors, nurses and medical directors in Jackson, MS, August 2013.

Ms. Rahel Mathews, presented “*Summary of findings of the community needs assessment*” to the Mississippi HIV Prevention Group in Jackson, MS, December 2013.

May, D., Stokes, E., Robertson, A. A., & Hoskins-Haynes, S. (2013, November). *Do schools really refer juveniles into the court system for less serious offenses?* Presented at The American Society of Criminology 70th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Ms. Colleen McKee presented on behalf of KIDS COUNT at the Delta Directions Consortium held in Clarksdale, MS., on July 31. Her presentation was entitled “*Mississippi KIDS COUNT: Who we are and what we do.*”

McKee, C. (2013, August). *Results of Mississippi's first survey of parental support for sex ed: Implications for teen pregnancy prevention*. Presented at CREATE Foundation commission meeting, Tupelo, MS.

McKee, C. (2013, September). *Do Mississippi parents support sex education in public school? Results of a state-level survey*. Presented at the Mississippi Public Health Association (MPHA) 76th Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.

McMillen, R., Gottlieb, M., Shaefer, R., Winickoff, J. P., & Klein, J. D. (2013, May). *Trends in electronic cigarette use among U.S. adults: Use is increasing in both smokers & nonsmokers*. Poster presented at the 13th Scientific Symposium of the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute, Miami, FL.

McMillen, R., Gottlieb, M., Shaefer, R., Winickoff, J. P., & Klein, J. (2013, November). *Three-year trends in the use of emerging tobacco products*. Poster presented at the 141st Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

McMillen, R., & Mahan, G. (2013). *Predictors of tobacco counseling among Mississippi pediatricians*. Poster presented at the 2013 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition, Orlando, FL.

McMillen, R., Wilson, K., Winickoff, J. P., Klein, J., & Tanski, S. (2013, October). *Three year trends in the use of emerging tobacco products among parents*. Poster Presented at the 2013 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National conference Exhibition, Orlando, FL.

McMillen, R., Shaefer, R., & Wilson, K. (2014). *Use of electronic cigarettes among parents*. Poster presented at the 13th Scientific Symposium of Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute, Miami, FL.

McMillen, R., Shaefer, R., & Wilson, K. (2014, May). *Use of electronic cigarettes among parents*. Poster presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

McMillen, R., Winickoff, J. P., Wilson, K., Shaefer, R., & Klein, L. (2014, February). *Electronic cigarette use and willingness to use approved nicotine replacement for cessation*. Podium Presentation presented to the 2014 Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.

Mitchell, K., & Abernathy, T. (2013, November). *Responding to freshmen student absences: The Pathfinders program at Mississippi State University*. Presented at the Southern Association for College Student Affairs Annual Conference, Norfolk, VA.

Myers, L., Cross, G. W., & Miley, R. (2013, October). *Mississippi eCitation project*. Presented at the 39th International Forum on Traffic Records and Highway Information Systems, St. Paul, MN.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) held its annual Science Education (Sci Ed) conference in Bethesda, MD, May 4-6. Dr. Ginger Cross, Dr. Julie Parker, Ms. Sydney Hall and Ms. Donna Loden attended the conference and shared information about the MSU-based project Partnerships to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for Children and Communities. The project is supported by a Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) from the NIH.

Neaves, T. T., Burns, M. A., Farrell, B., & McKee, C. (2013, October). *Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory*. International Forum on Traffic Records and Highway Systems, St. Paul, MN.

Neaves, T., & Hancock, R. (2013, September). *The Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory and traffic safety data analysis*. Presented at Mississippi Safety Training and Recognition Symposium, Olive Branch, MS.

Parrish, D. (2013, September). *Observational vehicle occupant protection surveys*. Presented at Mississippi Safety Training and Recognition Symposium, Olive Branch, MS.

Peterson, L., Ragsdale, K., & Dickerson, R. (2013). *Women's health efficacy in agricultural communities households in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Uganda: Comparing WEAI pilot data across three countries*. Oral presentation. American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA.

Ragsdale, K. (2013, August). *Using specific social media components/ digital platforms for campaigns*. Presented at 2013 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing, and Media, Atlanta, GA.

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATIONS

Ragsdale, K. (2014, September). Technology and media based interventions to prevent obesity. Presented at 2014 Southeastern Conference (SEC) Symposium, Atlanta, GA.

Ragsdale, K., Cross, G. W., Pellegrine, S. E., & Gallman, S. (2013, August). Special Breakout Session Speaker. *Interactive health communication targeting elementary students in Mississippi: Evaluating the effect of the HealthWorks! 'Be a Food Groupie' program on children's health literacy*. Poster presentation. 2013 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing & Media, Atlanta, GA.

On February 9, 2013, Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Lindsay Peterson co-authored an invited presentation about their USAID-funded project to Dr. Shashi Buluswar, Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Institute for Globally Transformative Technologies. Dr. Buluswar was invited to MSU by University President Mark Keenum.

Ragsdale, K., Pellegrine, S. E., Sutton, L. T., Hickson, D., & Gipson, J. (2013, November). *House Bill 999: Adoption and implementation of state-mandated abstinence-only or comprehensive sex education curriculum in Mississippi public schools*. Oral presentation. American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

Ragsdale, K., Walton, L. R., Hall, S. K., Bardwell, J. H., & Penick, C. B. (2013, August). *Harnessing social media to enhance sexual and reproductive health outreach for Mississippi youth: A case study of launching and monitoring the FactNotFiction Website*. Poster presentation. 2013 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing & Media, Atlanta, GA.

Ragsdale, K., Walton, L. R., Hall, S. K., Kirkland, C., Briley, C. A., Smith, C. L., Pellegrine, S. E., Conrad, K., & Frazier, T. E. (2013, July). *eBaby project: Using social media to enhance infant feeding behaviors among teen mothers in Mississippi*, 2013 Delta Directions Conference, Clarksdale, MS.

Ragsdale, K., Walton, L. R., Kirkland, C., Briley, C. A., Smith, C. L., Conrad, K., Frazier, T. E., & Pellegrine, S. E. (2013, August). *Developing and disseminating eBaby4U: Using social media to optimize early infant feeding outcomes among resource-limited African American teen mothers*. Oral presentation. 2013 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing & Media, Atlanta, GA.

On March 31, Dr. Angela Robertson was the featured presenter at the MSU/Harvard Law School's annual Delta Project meeting. She gave a presentation on "Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Juvenile Justice in Mississippi" to Harvard Law Students currently involved in the Delta Project. She also held a discussion group with interested students from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health team during her visit.

PRESENTATIONS

Robertson, A. A. (2013, July). "Curriculum and Assessment Changes" at the 2013 MASEP Annual Training, Gulfport, MS.

Robertson, A. A. (2013, November). *Substance abuse among impaired driving offenders: Examining the intersectionality of gender and race*. Presented at The American Society of Criminology 70th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Rutland, S., McCown, J., Walker, B. H., & Southward, L. H. (2014, April). *Exploring racial disparities in food access and obesity in Mississippi adults*. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at Mississippi State.

Shaefer, R., Wilson, K., McMillen, R., & Klein, J. D. (2014, May). *Electronic cigarette use among young adults*. Poster presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

Dr. Colleen Sinclair presented an invited symposium on September 13 to the Department of Psychology at Tulane University entitled "The New Story of Romeo and Juliet."

Southward, L. H. (2013, August). *Moving Mississippi forward: Current research & outreach*. Presented at CREATE Foundation commission meeting, Tupelo, MS.

Southward, L. H., & Buffington, A. (2014, June). *Celebrating Mississippi success stories: Developing a plan to highlight what works in our state*. Presented at the Mississippi Municipal League Annual Conference, Biloxi, MS.

Southward, L. H., & McKee, C. (2014, April). *Incorporating an evaluation plan into program design: Focus on quantitative research*. Invited oral presentation for the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers' Positioned for Progress Conference, Jackson, MS.

Southward, L. H., Ragsdale, K., McKee, C., Buffington, A., Baggett, D., & Blanchard, T. (2013, November). *Results from a three-year evaluation of parents' knowledge/attitudes towards mandated school-based health initiatives in Mississippi*. Poster presented at American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

Stives, K., Robertson, A. A., & May, D. (2013, November). *Demographic differences in health consequences of alcohol abusers: Evidence from Mississippi*. Presented at The American Society of Criminology 70th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2013, September). *A content analysis of rape myths on Twitter*. Presented at the Southern Criminal Justice Association, Virginia Beach, VA.

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2014, February). *Indications of potential support for restorative justice using pre- and post-test measures in drunk-driving vignettes*. Presented at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Philadelphia, PA.

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2014, March). *Tweeting rape culture: The influence of victim advocacy versus victim blame on Twitter*. Presented at the 2014 MSU Graduate Student Research Symposium, Mississippi State, MS.

PRESENTATIONS

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2014, April). *Identity management in the context of drunk driving scenarios*. Presented at the Southern Sociological Society, Charlotte, NC.

Torok, M., Wilson, K., McMillen, R., & Winickoff, J. P. (2014, May). *Knowledge about smoke exposure between multi-unit housing residents with and without young children living at home*. Poster presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

Valentine, N. (2014, May). *Tobacco data update*. Presented to the Mississippi Tobacco Control Network, Madison, MS.

Valentine, N., Li, M., & Funchess, T. (2014, May) *Tobacco data update for the Leadership Academy*. Presented to the Leadership Academy, Flowood, MS.

Valentine, N., Colvin, L., McClelland, E., Zhang, L., & McMillen, R. (2013, November). *Correlates of ever and current use of emerging tobacco products among Mississippi youth*. Poster presented at the 141st Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

Walker, B. H., & Southward, L. H. (2013, November). *From research to practice: Curbing and reversing Mississippi's childhood obesity*. Presentation given at the 7th Annual Southern Obesity Summit, Nashville, TN.

Wilson, J., Rich, L., & Robertson, A. A., (2012, November). *The impact of abuse trauma on risky sex*. Presentation at The American Society of Criminology 70th Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA.

Wilson, K., Torok, M., Klein, J. D., Levy, D. E., Winickoff, J. P., & McMillen, R. (2014, May). *Tobacco smoke incursions reported by residents of multi-unit housing*. Poster presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Conference, Vancouver, Canada.

GINA RICO-MENDEZ

Gina Rico-Mendez is a Columbian native settling into her role as a research associate at the Social Science Research Center (SSRC). She is a Fulbright Scholar working toward a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Mississippi State University.

Before coming to Mississippi State, Rico-Mendez received her bachelor's degree in political science in 2007, where she received an honorary degree and a master's degree in habitat (housing studies) in 2010, from National University of Columbia (Universidad Nacional de Columbia). Rico-Mendez was also recognized as the Student of the Year in Political Science at Nacional University.

She came to Mississippi State in the fall of 2012, and began working at the SSRC in February 2013. Initially, she came to the SSRC to improve her English, and later joined as a research associate.

Rico-Mendez began by learning how to write grants and research proposals. Her first project was for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Assessing FWS Employee Attitudes and Beliefs toward the Strategic Habitat Conservation Business Model," with Project Director and Research Fellow Heather Hanna. Mendez has since moved on to her current research project, Political Polarization in Social Media, which was a response to an RFA from the Russell Sage Foundation that will be featured in a special issue on Big Data in Political Economy.



Rico-Mendez analyzes data from her latest project.

Rico-Mendez has a passion for learning and research. "I'm craving more knowledge," she said. "I love learning about methodologies, theories and interacting with other researchers."

Her field of research interest is rural and agricultural policies. She chose Mississippi, so that she could use the research in the area to strengthen her dissertation on rural and agricultural policies.

When Rico-Mendez is not focused on her research, she enjoys hiking and being outdoors.

"The [Noxubee Wildlife] Refuge is my favorite thing in Mississippi," she said.

Another one of her favorite things in the state is music. She enjoys going out with friends to hear a band. She said it's very easy to find good bands in Mississippi and that's something she really enjoys.

On the other hand, one of her least favorite things about Mississippi is the weather. Where she is from (Bogata, Columbia), she says the weather is consistent and stays around 55 to 65 degrees all year.

As she is adjusting to the weather, she is also adjusting to the environment and the language and she can now proudly say "y'all."

When she finishes her Ph.D., Rico-Mendez plans to return to Columbia, taking all she's learned back with her, and she hopes to work at a research organization or an international organization conducting research.



Gina Rico-Mendez

by Catherine Stukenborg

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Alan Burns received his Master of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) in December, with a focus on e-government, organizational communication and branding. For their capstone project, Mr. Burns and other graduate students worked with the government of Brandon, MS., to develop a new brand identity for the city, as well as an implementation plan and recommendations for the future in communication and interaction with its constituents. Burns began full-time work in the SSRC in January as a Research Associate.

Ms. Anne Buffington serves on the Starkville School District's Strategic Planning Committee. The design model involves a two-year commitment to discussions centered on the district's academic goals as well as the prioritization of facility upgrades. As a member of a grassroots effort developed by community and MSU leaders, Ms. Buffington has also worked to ensure a smooth transition as the Starkville School District and the Okitbbeh County School District prepare for consolidation in August 2015. Additionally, Ms. Buffington was among one of 12 members selected by the Starkville School District Superintendent to serve on the Starkville High School Principal search committee.

Ms. Rachael Carroll, a student working under Dr. Colleen Sinclair, was the recipient of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Clara Mayo Award for research on intergroup relations.

Dr. Ronald E. Cossman was installed as President of the Southern Demographic Association (SDA) for a one-year term. The organization is now 44 years old, and is a scientific and educational organization comprised of persons with professional interests in demography and population studies. The SDA hosts an annual conference. Its flagship publication is *Population Research and Policy Review*, a peer-reviewed journal.

Dr. Ronald E. Cossman was re-elected as President of Starkville in Motion (SIM) for a one-year term. Starkville in Motion is a grassroots, non-profit organization with more than 250 members. Members of the group have been instrumental in improvements to the built environment such as the Lynn Lane Multi-Use Path (construction beginning Spring 2014), Safe Routes to Schools bike lanes and sidewalks, University Drive bike lanes, periodic neighborhood "Walk 'n Rolls" and Bike to Work Day events.

Ms. Ellen Davis, Undergraduate Research Assistant to the Director at the SSRC, recently received the "Outstanding Undergraduate Student" award upon graduation from the department of Political Science & Public Administration. Ms. Davis has accepted a Graduate Research Assistantship in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Georgia, where she will pursue a Masters in Natural Resource Economics.

The Electronic Citation System and Daily Activity Reporting System associated with the Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory won the Best Practices Project award at the 2013 International Traffic Safety Records Forum held in St. Paul, MN, October 27-31.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Bryan Farrell, of the Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory, has graduated with his Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from the department of Political Science & Public Administration. Mr. Farrell was also awarded "Outstanding Graduate Student" award from the department of Political Science & Public Administration.

Ms. Sydney Hall's poster submission to the Mississippi Public Health Association's Annual Conference was chosen as a top student poster. Students selected for this honor received a travel stipend, waived registration fee and waived hotel night for participating in the conference.

Dr. Maya McDoom was selected as a participant to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) New Connections Eighth Annual Symposium, from June 11-13 in Princeton, NJ. The invitation-only symposium aims to enhance the skill sets of participants and enables early to midcareer researchers to network, share research ideas and hear from senior researchers and mentors.

Dr. Robert McMillen was appointed Late Breaking News Editor for the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco.

The Mississippi Public Safety Data Laboratory earned an Honorable Mention for data visualization techniques at the 2013 International Traffic Safety Records Forum held in St. Paul, MN, October 27-31.

Dr. Tonya T. Neaves was conferred a Ph.D. in public policy and administration on May 17 from Mississippi State University. She was co-hooded by her chair, Dr. P. Edward French, and her mentor, Dr. Arthur G. Cosby, at the graduation commencement ceremony. Dr. Neave's dissertation was entitled: "The social and political resiliency of communities and implications for disaster policy: A case study of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill."

On March 27, Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was named an International Institute Research Scholar in "Recognition of Notable Contributions to the Advancement of Global Engagement at Mississippi State University."

In March 2014, Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was selected to be an Invited Speaker at the 2014 SEC Symposium, Prevention of Obesity: Overcoming a 21st Century Public Health Challenge, held in Atlanta, GA.

In spring 2014, Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale served on the Planning Committee for the Global Center for Aquatic Food Security at Mississippi State University.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Angela Robertson was named in a recent article published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* entitled, “The Most Prolific Female Scholars in Elite Criminology and Criminal Justice Journals, 2000–2010.” To be included among the list, the female scholars had to be the sole or lead author of articles published in 8 selected journals. Dr. Robertson was the lead author on three articles in the selected criminology and criminal justice journals. She has published 17 articles (lead author of 10) in peer-reviewed journals from 2000–2010.

Dr. Angela Robertson’s proposal, “A Center of Biomedical Research Excellence for Health Disparities in Mississippi,” was chosen to represent Mississippi State University for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) proposal submission. The proposal requests funding for a five-year period. This is a limited submission with only one proposal allowed for submission per fiscal year from institutions that hold two or less active COBRE awards.

Ms. Sarah Rutland received second place at the MSU Undergraduate Research Symposium for her presentation, “Exploring Racial Disparities in Food Access and Obesity in Mississippi Adults.”

Dr. Colleen Sinclair received both the Center for Open Science Replicating Important Findings in Social Psychology Grant and the Psi Chi Advisor Grant for the project “Revisiting Romeo and Juliet” - a replication and extension of the original Romeo and Juliet effect study.

The SSRC played an integral role in the process that led to the City of Starkville being awarded the title of Mississippi’s Healthiest Hometown among Mississippi towns of similar size by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. The award was accompanied by a cash prize of \$25,000 to fund community-based health activities. Two years ago, Starkville earned the designation of Mississippi’s Healthiest Hometown, regardless of size, and was awarded \$50,000. The Healthy Starkville committee, which authored the grant applications and directs the program for the city, is based at the SSRC.

Dr. Linda Southward received a Distinguished Service Award by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for her service on the National Steering Committee of KIDS COUNT. The award was presented in Baltimore, MD, on April 10.

Ms. Megan Stubbs-Richardson tied for first place at the MSU Graduate Research Symposium for her presentation, “Tweeting Rape Culture: The Influence of Victim Advocacy versus Victim Blame on Twitter.” For more information, visit the Graduate Student Association website: <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/current/orgs/gsa/>.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Many SSRC researchers have been actively involved with the Healthy Starkville committee over time. The most recent winning grant application was drafted by Ms. Alyson Karges, an SSRC Research Associate. The previous winning grant application was drafted by Dr. Linda Southward, Research Scientist and Coordinator of the Family & Children Research Unit. The Healthy Starkville committee was originally formed by Dr. Southward. Other SSRC researchers who have supported the Healthy Starkville committee include Dr. Ronald E. Cossman, Research Professor and Healthy Starkville Grants committee chair; Dr. Ginger Cross, Assistant Research Professor; Ms. Rahel Mathews, Research Associate III and current committee member; Ms. Colleen McKee, Project Director; Ms. Heather Hanna, Project Director; and Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale, Associate Research Professor.

ON THE

SOCIAL MEDIA TRACKING ANALYSIS SYSTEM (SMTAS)

The Social Media Tracking Analysis System (SMTAS) team began work on a new project in the of summer of 2014. Led by Dr. Somya Mohanty, Assistant Research Professor, the team began exploring a new method for analyzing sentiments in tweets.

Sentiment analysis is conducted by assigning values to certain words or phrases used in tweets. To assign value or sentiment to words and phrases, the SMTAS team used emoticons as its base. Emoticons are representations of facial expressions formed by keyboard combinations to express the writer's feelings.

The team began by qualifying nearly 4 million tweets. They took words in a tweet containing a smiley face, and assign them a positive value, and assign a negative value to words associated with tweets containing sad faces. They ran their tests on human qualified tweets, or tweets that had been coded as positive or negative by humans. With these analyses, the emoticon-based sentiment analysis was running at 74 percent accuracy.

Dr. Mohanty believes his team is the first to use emoticons as a basis for sentiment analysis, and thus far, it has proven to be highly accurate. Prior to the emoticon-based analysis, SMTAS had been using a third-party service that had an 80 percent accuracy rating. With a few short months of work, Dr. Mohanty and his team have already replicated the third-party service with almost the same accuracy.

This sentiment analysis system will have many uses. For researchers, sentiments towards a particular research item can be extremely useful. Politicians can use this kind of service to gauge the public's sentiments towards certain issues, or other candidates. In the private sector, companies can use it to gauge the public's reception of a new product or service being offered.

by Yance Falkner



LINDA SOUTHWARD, PH.D.: W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION (WKKF)

Beginning in December 2011, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) contracted with the SSRC's Family and Children's Research Unit (FCRU) to be the data partners in supporting the WKKF work in Mississippi, with a particular focus upon the Foundation's place-based work. The place-based work in Mississippi includes the areas of Sunflower County, East Biloxi and Jackson. Through this partnership, the research team provides visualization of data, compiles issues briefs and presents this information to the WKKF leadership team who, in turn, are carrying out the work in Mississippi. Dr. Connie Baird-Thomas and Dr. Linda Southward are co-PIs of the project.

"The work of the WKKF focuses upon improving the health, education and economic well-being of children and their families, while promoting the work via a racial equity and community engagement lens. We are pleased to be one component of this important work by providing solid, reliable data to the WKKF," explained Dr. Linda Southward, coordinator of the FCRU.

The project, which is approaching its three year mark, has the potential to continue for another two years.

by Rachel Smith

HORIZON

ROBERT MCMILLEN, PH.D.: E-CIGARETTES

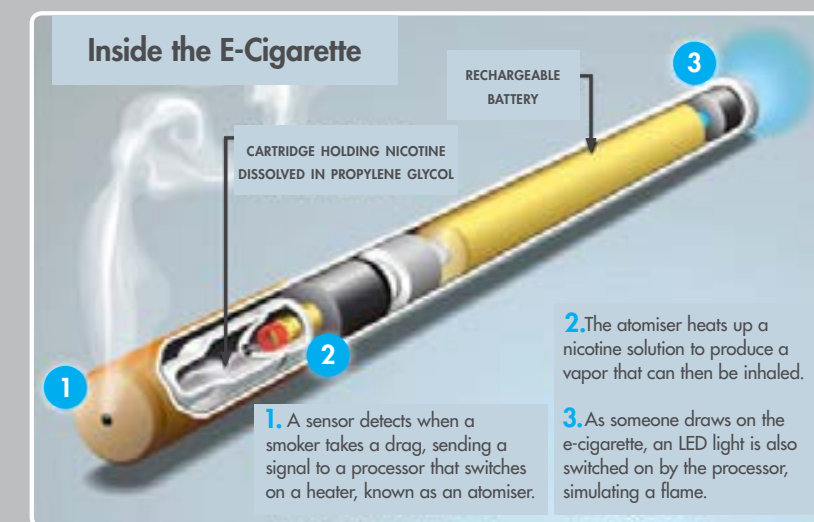
In 2007, electronic cigarettes entered the market as a new tobacco-alternative product. E-cigarettes work by vaporizing nicotine infused liquids in a cartridge. This unique delivery system allows the cartridges to be flavored with fruity and exotic aromas for more user appeal. These attractive flavors are one thing researchers point to as a cause for the recent increase in the use.

In 2009, the Mississippi Tobacco Data (MTD) team and Dr. Robert McMillen became interested in the effects and use of e-cigarettes. In 2010, the team added questions regarding electronic cigarettes to its national survey. At the time, electronic cigarette usage was very low: less than two percent of adults indicated they had tried electronic cigarettes.

Between 2011 and 2012, tobacco companies entered into the electronic cigarette market. These companies began their own market research and either purchased existing electronic cigarette manufacturers or developed their own. With market organization, structure and advertising, electronic cigarette users increased significantly. By 2013, survey results found 13 percent of adults had tried electronic cigarettes.

McMillen's research also found that 33 percent of current e-cigarette users were former smokers or previously never-smokers. His concern is that the electronic cigarette market could contribute to primary nicotine addiction and may encourage more smokers to continue smoking with this alternative to combustible cigarettes.

Even more concerning is the growing number of middle and high school students using electronic cigarettes. MTD has seen a gradual increase in teen electronic cigarette use in the past few years. From 2010-2013, the number of high school students to use electronic cigarettes increased by more than 250 percent. Electronic cigarette companies are seemingly using the same advertising tactics used for combustible cigarettes, depicting electronic cigarettes as a cool, more acceptable alternative for cigarettes.



McMillen hopes to see FDA regulations in the near future. Policy and legislation are two specific outcomes he hopes his research can help to inform. The FDA currently does not restrict electronic cigarettes for online sales, child safety issues or marketing. For cities that became smoke-free before electronic cigarettes became popular, electronic cigarette use is not prohibited in indoor public places because they are not explicitly listed in smoke-free laws. These are just a few of the issues that need to be addressed, according to McMillen.

by Yance Falkner

SPECIAL COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The productivity of SSRC Scientists remains high and the support from extramural organizations is quite varied. Our research benefits from awards and partnerships from the following:

American Academy of Pediatrics	New York Sea Grant
American Lung Association	New York University
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Southeastern Universities Research Association
DentaQuest Foundation	Tec de Monterrey, Mexico
Dreyfus Health Foundation	Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
E Q Health Solutions	U.S. Agency for International Development
Federal Motor Carriers	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute	U.S. Department of Commerce
Harvard Law School	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Harvard School of Public Health	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Center for Intermodal Transportation	U.S. Department of Justice
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration	U.S. Department of Transportation
National Institute of Food and Agriculture	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
National Institutes of Health	University of Catania, Italy
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
National Science Foundation	Washington University

Within Mississippi, the SSRC has partnerships with and/or funding from the following:

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Mississippi	Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
The Bower Foundation	Mississippi Division of Public Safety Planning
Center for Mississippi Health Policy	Mississippi Education Innovation
Delta State University	Mississippi Health and Advocacy Program
Department of Transportation/Public Safety	Mississippi Health Care Association
Health Care Foundation of North Mississippi	Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Healthy Mississippi	Mississippi Non-profits
Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program	Mississippi Office of Highway Safety
Mississippi Area Health Education Center	North Mississippi Medical Center
Mississippi Association of Grant Makers	Office of Research and Economic Development
Mississippi Case Management Consortium	Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Tobacco Control
Mississippi Center for Education	Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Justice	Preusser Research Group, Inc.
Mississippi Department of Education	Southern Research Group
Mississippi Department of Health	University of Mississippi Medical Center
Mississippi Department of Human Services	
Mississippi Department of Medicaid	
Mississippi Department of Mental Health	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Merriam-Webster defines an annual report as “a usually lengthy report issued yearly by an organization giving an account of its internal workings and especially its finances.” While I don’t disagree, I have come to view the SSRC’s annual report as so much more.

It is a showcase of the talents and skills of a unique group of people assembled for a monumental task: to use research methods to understand the problems and issues facing our world and then DO SOMETHING about them. It is inspiring to read the accomplishments in these pages and encouraging to see so many doing so much to make life a little better for those around us. Congratulations to the colleagues whose work and accomplishments appear in the pages of the 2014 SSRC Annual Report.

This report is unusual in that it is largely designed and produced by undergraduate students. Most companies or organizations would not trust such a significant task to students, however, because of the quality education they are receiving at Mississippi State University and their individual motivation to achieve excellence, this annual report showcases great talent and significant potential for their future careers.

A special thank you to Miss **Mallory Cadenhead** who took the lead on the design and production of this year’s report. She has worked tirelessly to present a well-designed and complete report. She has also written several of the features as well as served as the publication’s copy editor. She is to be applauded for her efforts. A number of other students contributed features and spent countless hours editing; I’d like to thank them for their efforts as well. **Yance Faulkner, Kelsey Smith, Rachel Smith, Amber Stewart** and **Catherine Stukenborg** are also to be commended for their contributions.

It is with a heavy heart that I sign off on my final annual report for the SSRC. My time here has been truly inspirational and the friendships are many. I will miss being a part of this dynamic and productive team.

Best wishes,



Laura R. Walton, Ph.D., APR
Associate Research Professor
Research Fellow and Coordinator, MCL

 @MSU_SSRC

 FACEBOOK.COM/MSSTATESSRC

 YOUTUBE.COM/MSUSSRC

 @MSU_SSRC

ONE RESEARCH BLVD., SUITE 103 STARKVILLE, MS 39759

WWW.SSRC.MSSTATE.EDU