



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER

Annual Report 2017

Letter from the Director

The Social Science Research 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, a faculty group 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. In addition to scholars on campus, 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 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.

Over the last 5 years, the Center's research programs have received financial support from over 80 extramural sources of funding, including many of the most prestigious research organizations in the nation. For example, our research is currently being supported by the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Health, National Institute of Justice, USAID, and the Centers for Disease Control, as well as numerous other federal and state agencies. Foundation support is also important with substantial investments in the Center by the Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and others. The amount of extramural support is among the largest for such social science enterprises nationwide. It is noteworthy to mention, just as this annual report was being completed we were notified that the Center had received the largest grant in its history of 5.25 million dollars from HRSA to initiate a program of evaluation and assessment of Mississippi's children. A ground



breaking project that is being led by Dr. Linda Southward and her colleagues, Dr. Connie Baird-Thomas and Dr. Heather Hanna.

This year the Center became the home to two new research laboratories. Dr. Cindy Bethel from the Department of Computer Science has located her Social, Therapeutic & Robotic Systems Lab (STARS) in the Center. This new lab focuses on researching the therapeutic possibilities of robot systems with her current work being supported by the National Science Foundation. At the same time Dr. Holli Seitz from the Department of Communications has established The Message Laboratory which is developing studies in the emerging area of the science of science communication. Her initial work is focusing on vaccine messaging and is supported by the Henry Family Foundation. These laboratories join our existing lab programs that feature the Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory, the Social Relations CoLLABorative, and the Innovative Data Laboratory.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arthur G. Cosby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "A" and "C".

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

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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 that social scientists face 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 various research problems.

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.

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.

SSRC Facilities

The SSRC is currently located in the Mississippi Technology Center, in the Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park. The Mississippi Health Policy Research Center (MHPRC) is located at the CAVS E building in Canton. In addition to the core space at CAVS E, the SSRC has access to state-of-the-art conference and meeting facilities.

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.





From L-R: Leslie Hossfeld, Julie Parker, Rebecca Goldberg, Ben Walker, Holli Seitz, Roberto Gallardo, Gina Rico Mendez

Research Fellows

The SSRC seeks to expand its research fellows programs in both its traditional disciplinary arenas of sociology, psychology, political science, public administration, geography and social work, as well as in new areas that include anthropology, architecture, communication, computer science, economics, epidemiology, health education, law policy and other social science related disciplines. The Center offers this honorary title to individuals who have made significant impacts on its research programs.

Research Fellows may work in the Center or in outside collaborative entities.

Anne Buffington

Anne Buffington has served as a researcher, program evaluator, and technical writer on numerous federal, foundation, state, and intramurally funded research grants at the Social Science Research Center. She has co-authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and final reports, and has synthesized and disseminated results through dedicated websites and other outlets. For the last 2 years, Buffington has directed the Annie E. Casey Foundation's policy work on chronic absence in Mississippi's public schools. She also developed and implemented the EMPOWR study, which is funded by the Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Roberto Gallardo

Dr. Gallardo is formerly an Associate Extension Professor of the MSU Extension Service. He is interested in local and regional rural community economic development, including use of technology. He spearheaded the efforts of the MSUES Intelligent Community Institute that helps rural communities transition to, plan for, and prosper in the digital age.

Rebecca M. Goldberg

Dr. Goldberg is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology & Foundations at MSU. She is the Co-Director of the Social Relations Collaborative and the resident scientist-practitioner. Goldberg is a Licensed Professional Counselor, a National Certified Counselor, and a Certified Grief Counselor. Her research interests include relational aggression, gender, marriage and family therapy, social influence and interpersonal relationships, human-animal bond and animal-assisted therapy, and grief counseling.

Leslie Hossfeld

Dr. Hossfeld joined MSU's Department of Sociology as Professor and Head of Department in 2015. She founded and directs the Mississippi Food Insecurity Project that examines and documents food insecurity and food access in the Global South. Her current research focuses on local food systems development and food access in Mississippi.

Julie Parker

Dr. Parker is an Assistant Professor in the School of Human Sciences at MSU. She currently has a research and teaching appointment, as well as an Extension grant. Her background in pedagogy for early childhood professionals and developmental and physical well-being for young children with and without disabilities are central to her research and service. She has served as PI or co-Investigator on several grants that focus on specific needs of children with disabilities, as well as authored or co-authored several publications that relate to children's well-being and development.

Gina Rico Mendez

Dr. Rico Mendez, originally from Colombia, is a Postdoctoral Associate in the SSRC. Her Fellowship is jointly funded by the SSRC and Department of Sociology. She is currently researching food systems and food security, with interests in the Political Economy of Food Security, Development Studies, Political Institutions and Social and Political Networks. More specifically, her work examines the consolidation of state legitimacy in non-industrialized nations given transformations in the food security narrative.

Holli Seitz

Dr. Seitz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication with a joint appointment in the SSRC. She was a 2007 Presidential Management Fellow and worked as a social media specialist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Her research interests include message effects, cancer communication, and using communication to achieve health equity.

Ben Walker

Ben Walker is a Research Associate at the SSRC. He works under Dr. Linda Southward in the Family and Children's Research Unit where he conducts applied demographic research on the health and well-being of children and families in Mississippi. Walker is currently working as a data analyst on the W.K. Kellogg funded Mississippi Data Project which aims to deliver data concerning the health, education, and economic well-being of Mississippi's children and families to Kellogg grantees and state level agencies. His research interests as a doctoral student include social demography, medical sociology, and health inequality.

Special Collaborative Partnerships

The productivity of the 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	Tec. de Monterrey, Mexico
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	U.S. Agency for International Development
E Q Health Solutions	U.S. Department of Agriculture
Education Services Foundation	U.S. Department of Commerce
Federal Motor Carriers	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Harvard Law School	U.S. Department of Justice
Harvard School of Public Health	U.S. Department of Transportation
National Center for Intermodal Transportation	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
National Institutes of Health	University of Illinois
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	University of Split, Croatia
National Science Foundation	University of Zagreb, Croatia
New York Sea Grant	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Rice Research and Extension Center at the University of Arkansas	Walton Family Foundation
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Washington University
Southeastern Universities Research Association	

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

Blue Cross & Blue Shield Foundation of Mississippi	Mississippi Department of Transportation
The Bower Foundation	Mississippi Division of Public Safety Planning
Center for Mississippi Health Policy	Mississippi First
College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University	Mississippi Health and Advocacy Program
Health Care Foundation of North Mississippi	Mississippi Health Care Association
Healthy Mississippi	Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program	Mississippi Non-profits
Mississippi Area Health Education Center	Mississippi Office of Highway Safety
Mississippi Attorney General's Office	North Mississippi Medical Center
Mississippi Association of Grantmakers	Office of Research and Economic Development
Mississippi Center for Education	Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Tobacco Control
Mississippi Center for Justice	Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Education	Preusser Research Group, Inc.
Mississippi Department of Health	Public Health Program at Jackson State University
Mississippi Department of Human Services	Tougaloo College
Mississippi Department of Medicaid	University of Mississippi Medical Center
Mississippi Department of Mental Health	William Winters Institute for Racial Reconciliation
Mississippi Department of Public Safety	Women's Foundation of Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services	

Annual Impact



34
New Projects

41
Publications



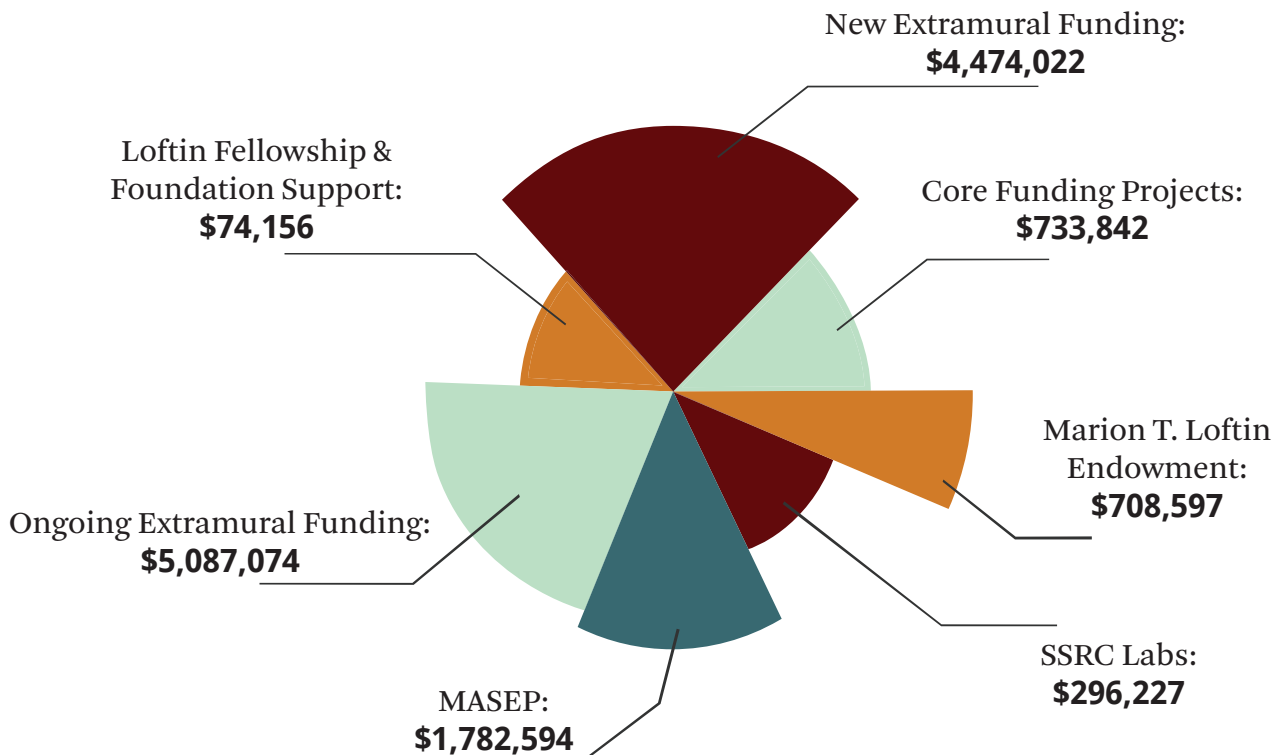
36
Ongoing Projects

63
Presentations



The SSRC launched a new website in August 2016 that is optimized for desktop, tablet, and mobile use. Visit ssrc.msstate.edu.

Total Funding: \$13,156,512



Serving Mississippi's Children: The Family and Children Research Unit

For the past two decades, the Family and Children Research Unit has been working to improve the well-being, education, health, and safety of Mississippi's children. Their work includes small and large scale projects, policy grants, and impactful research.

By Alan Burns

The evidence has been increasingly compelling over the past 20 years that positive experiences in early childhood influence future well-being into adulthood. Given the less than optimal outcomes of Mississippi's children, it was clear that a specific unit focusing upon children and families at MSU's SSRC was needed," says Dr. Linda Southward, Research Professor at the Social Science Research Center and Coordinator for the Family and Children Research Unit (FCRU).

With an initial investment of \$10,000 via MAFES, the FCRU was founded in 1998 at the Social Science Research Center to research, evaluate, and develop programs pertaining to children and families. Within three years of the initial investment, a substantial grant of more than \$1 million was awarded from the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality.

Southward explains that the extensive array of past and current projects reveals an expertise on topics pertaining to the general well-being of children, including their education, health, and safety. Overall, the projects work to improve outcomes through a wide array of public private partnerships and health care providers.

The FCRU has seen recent funding from such agencies as: The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Center for Mississippi Health Policy, the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Woodward Hines Educational Foundation, and the Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Mississippi Data Project

The Family and Children Research Unit team is currently at the mid-point of a three-year project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF). The goal of the Mississippi Data Project (MDP) is to enhance data-driven decision making and promote best-practices and policies for children in Mississippi. This past year saw the roll-out of the MDP website which is populated with fact sheets, infographics and maps. The team has also produced several reports and policy briefs as the result of research in the areas of suspension practices in Mississippi public schools and birth outcomes for Mississippi children.

Mississippi KIDS COUNT: A Decade of Service to Mississippi's Children

For the past ten years, the FCRU has served as the home of the Mississippi KIDS COUNT (MS KIDS COUNT) program. The program is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), a private philanthropy based in Baltimore, Maryland that provides grants for federal agencies, states, counties, and communities. These grants are used to address issues affecting children such as poverty, disconnection from family, and limited access to opportunity.

"Mississippi KIDS COUNT is the leading resource for comprehensive information on the health, education, safety, and economic well-being of our state's children," says Southward. "We also serve as a catalyst for improving outcomes for children, families, and communities."

The project strives to provide accurate, non-partisan data and original research about Mississippi's children to policymakers, educators, parents, advocates, and the general public. This research and data is presented each year in various formats including the annual MS KIDS COUNT Fact Book, the Mississippi section of the national KIDS COUNT Data Center, policy grants and briefs, and most recently with the MS KIDS COUNT Legislative Countdown Calendar.

Each year, MS KIDS COUNT releases a state-wide fact book at the annual Mississippi KIDS COUNT Capitol Day. This book, which is provided to all members of the Mississippi Legislature during Capitol Day, highlights current state-level data on Mississippi's children.

Sammy Moon, Coordinator of the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers, notes, "The integrity and reliability of KIDS COUNT data is important for both the public and private sectors in Mississippi because it provides a baseline from which programs and initiatives can be planned and evaluation protocols can be developed. If elected officials, nonprofit stakeholders, and philanthropic investors are all working together using the same information, better decisions will be made for Mississippi's children, families and communities."



The team also provides important state, county, and/or school district-level data for the KIDS COUNT data center. This national and state-level resource for indicators related to children’s well-being is maintained by the AECF and the individual state-level grantees. Data provided includes updated demographics, education, economic, health, and community data from state agencies and the United States Census Bureau.

This year also marked the launch of their Legislative Countdown Calendar. The calendar was placed on the Mississippi State Capitol desk of each legislator on the first day of the 2017 session. The 90-day calendar featured information relating to the well-being of Mississippi’s children and families, as well as a countdown of days left in the legislative session. The calendar also featured artwork from Mississippi 5th graders on weekend pages.

“The Legislative Countdown Calendar allows Mississippi KIDS COUNT to put facts and information pertaining to the well-being of Mississippi’s children in front of our state legislators each day of the session. The goal is to equip our legislators with research and data so that they can make the best decisions for the future of the children in our state,” says Laure Bell, a Project Coordinator for the FCRU.

Following the Data Policy Grants

MS KIDS COUNT has also done extensive work on policy grants and briefs since 2014. They were awarded a “Following the Data” policy grant from the AECF in 2014 and have been building upon that initial work with a new

grant each year. The FCRU uses the grants to address policy and system changes needed to favorably impact health and educational outcomes for Mississippi’s youngest children (0-8 years old). Overall, the goal is to increase awareness among stakeholders on the importance of school attendance beginning in Pre-K and ensure health, developmental, and social and emotional screenings for Pre-K children.

The primary focus in the last three years’ grants has been to show the importance of school attendance by providing in-depth analysis of chronic absenteeism using data from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). Chronic absenteeism is defined as the percentage of students who miss ten percent or more of the school year, including excused and unexcused absences. This averages to about 18 days in a 180-day school year.

“Chronic absence is a critical indicator of whether students are at academic risk and how likely they are to improve their achievement levels when they are physically present for classroom instruction,” says Anne Buffington, the Principal Investigator of the policy grants and member of the FCRU and MS KIDS COUNT.

Based on this, the team has created five policy briefs outlining chronic absence rates for the state, individual school districts and schools (K-12). These briefs were developed, disseminated, and presented to members of the legislature via legislative conventions, press conferences in collaboration with Dr. Carey Wright, Mississippi’s State Superintendent of Education, and at the MDE’s Chronic Absence Summit.

"When we first started our research, the state chronic absence rate was fifteen percent, but the most recent research has shown a drop to thirteen percent," Buffington explains. "School administrators are recognizing that tracking attendance during the first two months of school can help to identify at-risk students. Across the state, we are seeing schools adopt improvement plans for individual students and focus on the importance of school attendance through district-wide awareness campaigns."

Most recently, the fourth grant is beginning a study of suspension policies in Mississippi schools. This study will focus on addressing the disproportionate percentage of African American students who are suspended each year and seeks to address the opportunity to promote more equitable and effective alternatives to traditional disciplinary policies.

Child Care Center's Pandemic Preparedness

In 2015 and 2016, the FCRU worked closely with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to conduct a national needs assessment of licensed child care centers across America. The study, titled the National Survey of Licensed Child Care Directors, would be used to guide future planning and resource development regarding child care preparation for seasonal/pandemic influenza.

The survey was the most recent in a series of work over two decades between the FCRU, SSRC, and AAP. A formal research partnership was established between the AAP and the SSRC in 2001 by Dr. Arthur Cosby, following Dr. Linda Southward's selection as one of 50 child health leaders to

join the AAP's Center for Child Health Research.

The SSRC and AAP also partnered with the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh on the survey. Drs. Timothy Shope and Judith Martin, both Associate Professors of Pediatrics, helped provide subject area expertise in order to design a survey on preparedness that reflected the most current science and best practices.

Beginning in August 2015, the team collected contact information for over 189,000 licensed child care centers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Once all data was acquired and standardized into a database, the FCRU worked with the Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) at the SSRC to conduct the survey. The SRL then interviewed 518 randomly sampled child care centers during the spring of 2016.

The 2016 survey of child care directors was a follow-up to a previous version administered by the SSRC in 2008.

"The timing of the survey was very fortuitous because it gave us the opportunity to look at how child care center directors' attitudes and behaviors differed before and after the H1N1 pandemic influenza that occurred in 2009," says Ben Walker, a Research Associate for the FCRU. "To my knowledge, there have been no nationally representative surveys conducted of licensed child care center directors which makes these two surveys especially novel."

The study, which was published in *Pediatrics* in June 2017, used six categories to determine pandemic influenza preparedness: general infection control, communication, seasonal influenza control, use of health consultants, quality of child care, and perceived barriers.

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Among Child Care Center Directors in 2008 and 2016

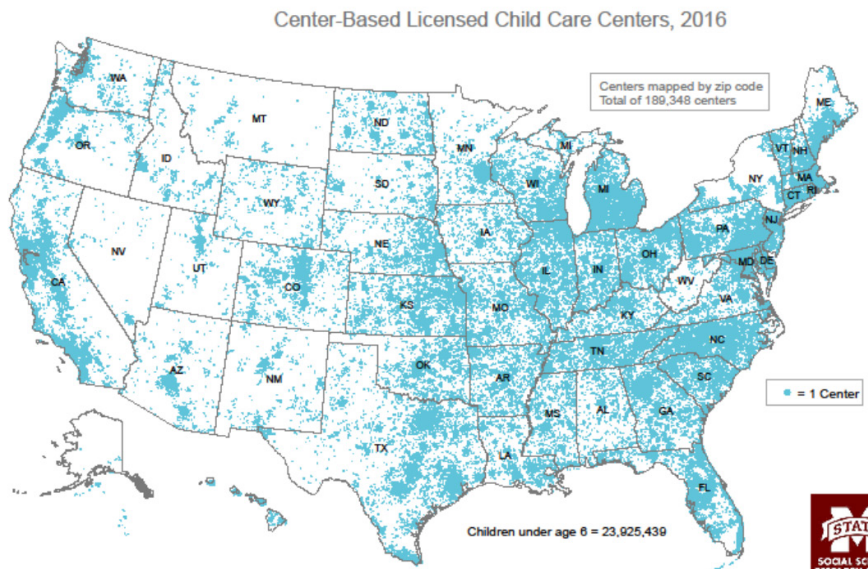
Timothy R. Shope, MD, MPH, MEd, FGAACP, FAAP, FAHA, MEd, MPH, MSPH, MPP, DrPH, Dr. Linda Southward, PhD, and John S. McGowan, MD, MPH, MS, MEd, MPH

OBJECTIVE: Children in child care centers represent an important population to consider in attempts to mitigate the spread of an influenza pandemic. This national survey, conducted in 2008 and 2016, assessed directors' reports of their child care centers' pandemic influenza preparedness before and after the 2009 H1N1 novel influenza pandemic.

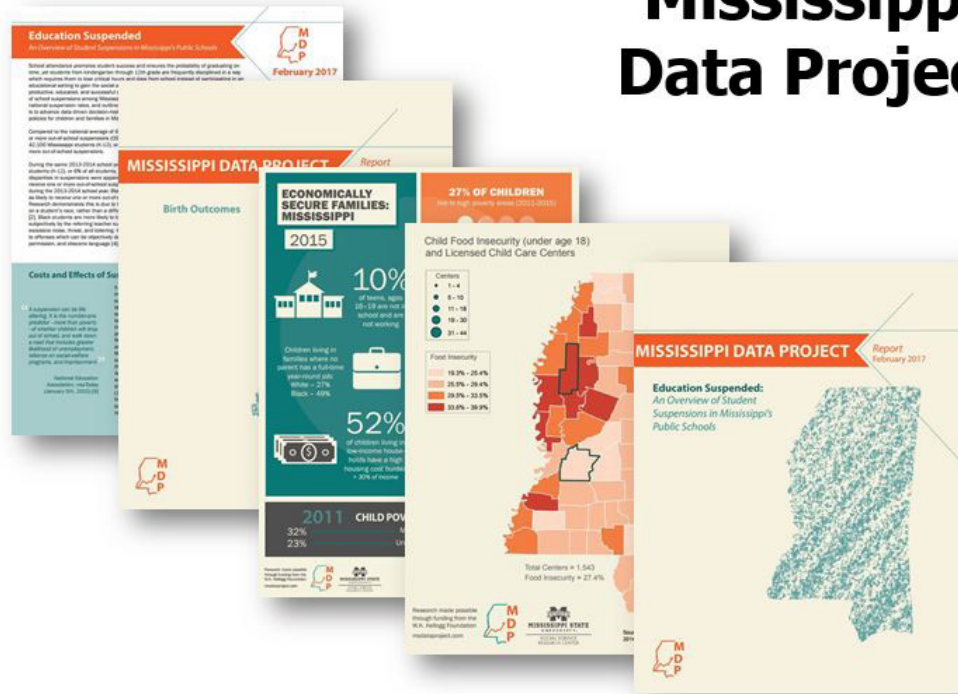
METHODS: This was a telephone-based survey of child care center directors randomly selected from a national database of licensed US child care centers who were queried about their preparedness for pandemic influenza. We grouped conceptually related items in 6 domains into indexes: general infection control, communication, seasonal influenza control, use of health consultants, quality of child care, and perceived barriers. These indexes, along with other center and director characteristics, were used to predict pandemic influenza preparedness.

RESULTS: Among 1500 and 518 child care center directors surveyed in 2008 and 2016, respectively, preparedness for pandemic influenza was low and did not improve. Only 7% of directors had taken concrete actions to prepare their centers. Having served as a center director during the 2009 influenza pandemic did not influence preparedness. After adjusting for covariates, child care health consultation and years of director's experience were positively associated with pandemic influenza preparedness, whereas experiencing perceived barriers such as lack of knowing what to do in the event of pandemic influenza, was negatively associated with pandemic influenza preparedness.

CONCLUSIONS: Pandemic influenza preparedness of child care center's directors needs to improve. Child care health consultants are likely to be important collaborators in addressing this problem.



Mississippi Data Project



Results showed that pandemic influenza preparedness did not improve between 2008 and 2016, with only 7% of directors having taken concrete actions to prepare their centers.

“We know from having completed this survey that pandemic preparedness of child care center directors needs to improve,” says Walker. “Those in child care centers represent about one quarter of all children in the United States, and they are a particularly important population considering the increased ability of influenza to spread in institutional settings.”

Evaluation of Get2College

The most recent project for the FCRU is an evaluation of a new pilot program from the Woodward Hines Education Foundation’s Get2College program. Get2College, founded in 1995, is a multi-faceted program targeted towards increasing the college-going rate of students in Mississippi schools by providing training for school counselors and parents, and one-on-one guidance for students.

Get2College’s newest program utilizes on-site college counseling in eight pilot high schools around the state. The FCRU’s evaluation approach is a three-year, mixed-method evaluation including interviews with school counselors and analysis of program data at both pilot schools and demographically matched comparison group schools.

“By using a mixed methods approach, we’ll be able to collect in-depth data – both quantitative data about the efficacy of the program overall, and qualitative data about the first-hand experiences of counselors and students as they prepare for students’ college transitions,” says Izzy

Pellegrine. “This approach should give us real insights into how schools, counselors, and students navigate a very complicated process.”

This evaluation will also include a student focus group component to better understand utilization of Get2College’s on-site services.

The overall goal of the evaluation is to measure the efficacy of Get2College’s programming in assisting students with the college transition process and to make recommendations about continued programming directions.

Visit fcru.ssrc.msstate.edu for more information on the Family & Children Research Unit’s projects, news, and publications. For more information on Mississippi KIDS COUNT, visit kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu.

Smoke-Free Communities in Mississippi

Mississippi has been making strides towards protecting its citizens since 2002 when the first 100% smoke-free ordinance was passed in the state. Mississippi Tobacco Data releases important, up-to-date research on tobacco usage in the state, the communities that are becoming smoke-free, and the impacts of these moves.

By Alan Burns

Over the past 15 years, communities around Mississippi have been making progress towards protecting their citizens from cigarette smoke. The passing of 100% smoke-free ordinances first started in 2002, and have slowly taken hold in the state.

In 2006, Starkville became the third municipality in the state to pass a smoke-free ordinance, preventing smoking indoors at restaurants and businesses. Previously two smaller cities in the Mississippi Delta, Metcalfe and Mayersville, adopted ordinances in 2002 and 2005 respectively.

“When Starkville adopted the ordinance in 2006, it was honestly still a novel idea,” says Dr. Robert McMillen, Professor of Psychology at Mississippi State University and Associate Director of the Tobacco Control Unit at the Social Science Research Center.

“Starting in that year, we really began to see a lot of momentum in the state,” he recalls. “The city of Starkville went smoke-free in May, and by the end of 2006 we had also included Tupelo, Oxford, and Hattiesburg.”

Currently, around one-third of Mississippi’s population are protected at the county or local level by ordinances. McMillen hopes to see that number rise in the future with more ordinances from communities and possible action at the state level.

The most recent Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control conducted by Mississippi Tobacco Data at the Social Science Research Center found overwhelming support across Mississippi for a comprehensive state law. Over three-quarters (75.2%) of adults surveyed in the state support a law that prohibits smoking in public indoor places such as workplaces, public buildings, offices, restaurants, and bars.

Kimberly Hughes, Mississippi Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Action Network, says that she sees smoke-free workplaces becoming the accepted norm in today’s society.

“It was rare to find smoke-free workplaces in the past,” says Hughes. “But there has been a lot of work over the years to get Mississippi to become smoke-free and we’ve started to

see progress much quicker.”

Health and Economic Impacts

One of the largest reports that Mississippi Tobacco Data produces each year is “The Health & Economic Burden of Tobacco on Mississippi.” Each year, this report breaks down tobacco usage statistics in Mississippi adults and youths, as well as the health and economic impacts of tobacco use in the state.

The 2017 version of the report observes that over 4,500 deaths in Mississippi each year are attributed to tobacco, the most common cause being lung cancer and heart disease. In order to better understand the health impacts of going smoke-free, McMillen looked at data for heart attack admissions in the area hospitals for Starkville and Hattiesburg for six months before and after the ordinances were passed.

He compared data from those living in the city to those living in the county, where an ordinance was not in place. The results showed a 27% reduction in heart attacks in Starkville, compared to only a 15% reduction in the county; similarly, Hattiesburg saw a 13.4% reduction in those inside the city, compared to only a 3.8% reduction for those in the county.

“Heart attacks are on a decline everywhere, but we’re seeing a larger decline in those communities that are protected by smoke free ordinances,” McMillen says. “We’ve seen from the data that communities that implemented a smoke-free ordinance saw a reduction in heart attack admissions compared to a control community without an ordinance.” Part of his data also looked at the amount of Medicaid spending related to diseases caused from secondhand smoke in 2012-2013.

“Medicaid spent \$36 million dollars that year on diseases attributed to secondhand smoke. These were not people that smoked themselves, just those that were impacted directly by being around smoke, something that could be directly affected with these policies and ordinances,” McMillen observed.

The report also looked at the effects of the ordinances on revenue from tourism and economic development taxes,

	ATTRIBUTABLE POPULATION RISK	TOTAL COSTS	COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE
POPULATION - BIRTH TO AGE 17			
LOW BIRTH WEIGHT CODES - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 765	18.0%	\$85,240,444	\$15,343,280
ACUTE LOWER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS (BIRTH TO AGE 5 ONLY) - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 480-488, 466	25.0%	\$28,551,853	\$7,137,963
OTITIS MEDIA AND MIDDLE EAR EFFUSION - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 382	14.0%	\$16,501,901	\$2,310,266
ASTHMA - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 493	35.0%	\$28,344,206	\$9,920,472
POPULATION - AGES 18+			
HEART ATTACKS AND OTHER HEART DISEASES - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 410	6.9%	\$12,149,244	\$838,298
LUNG CANCER - ICD CODES THAT BEGIN WITH 162	4.9%	\$12,204,636	\$598,027
		\$182,992,284	\$36,148,306

ABOVE: MTD's "Medicaid Costs & Secondhand Smoke" detailed the estimated costs attributable to exposure to second hand smoke via data provided by the Mississippi Division of Medicaid.

also knows as TED taxes. Looking at the average of TED tax revenue in smoke-free communities compared to those that were not smoke-free at the time yielded some important information. McMillen found that those who had implemented ordinances saw an average growth of 4.94% in TED tax revenue, while those that did not implement an ordinance saw a drop of 0.89%.

"It's having a huge financial impact on the state," McMillen states. "Especially in health care savings. Health is improving across the state; more people are protected."

Joining the Smoke-Free Community

Becoming smoke-free is relatively free and easy, notes McMillen. For municipalities and counties, there is no cost to the public to make the change. The Board of Alderman at the municipal level or the Supervisors at the county level must draft an ordinance that defines what they consider smoking and where it is prohibited. Ordinances after 2010 began including language regarding e-cigarettes, with some existing ordinances being amended or updated to include e-cigarettes.

"The good news is that there is already a boiler plate

provided by a foundation, drafted by lawyers and tested in the courts," says McMillen. "Most ordinances in Mississippi are along the same lines, utilizing that boiler plate and the resources around the state to help piece these ordinances together."

He also notes that often the Department of Health will assist with small grants to help produce the required stickers or posters that are displayed in restaurants and businesses.

Kimberly Hughes explains that the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is part of a coalition of partners who meet with local elected officials to talk about the possible health and economic impacts of smoke-free workplaces on a community. They work directly with grassroots organizations to create local support in communities, as well as recruit elected officials in an area to serve as champions for the cause.

Mississippi's Smoke-Free Future

While both McMillen and Hughes believe Mississippi is making great strides towards a smoke-free future, they both understand that there is still plenty to be done.

McMillen hopes that more communities on Mississippi's coast will adopt more ordinances in the future. A large part of the state's tourism takes place there, especially around the beaches and casinos in the area. He notes that since a majority of the country is smoke-free (26 states are 100% smoke-free and 16 states are partially smoke-free), tourists are often surprised that areas still allow smoking.

"Communities that pass ordinances, but exempt casinos are not considered smoke-free," McMillen says. "We've seen support from casinos, especially from the workers who would like a smoke-free work environment. Those are well paying jobs, but some are apprehensive to take them due to the smoke-filled environment. We see this a place to make progress."

Both also believe that a state-wide comprehensive law would have a greater impact on protecting the state's citizens.

"It's important to point out that while we've done well at a community level, we really need a state wide law. We're working with those at the state-level to educate them more on the importance of going completely smoke-free," states Hughes.

McMillen also notes that the grassroots work in the state has really made a significant impact, bridging collaborative efforts from the bottom up. The grassroots support coupled with support from large organizations like the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi are paramount to the progress.

Hughes notes, "At the end of the day, everyone deserves to breathe smoke-free air."

Visit mstobaccodata.org today for the 2017 Tobacco Report and policy research on tobacco usage and effects in Mississippi.

BELOW LEFT: The 2017 Tobacco Report is a great resource for information on the impact of tobacco in Mississippi. BELOW RIGHT: MTD releases updated fact sheets on their website any time a new municipality goes smoke free.



2017 TOBACCO REPORT



THE HEALTH & economic burden OF TOBACCO ON MISSISSIPPI

June 30, 2017

2017 • mississippi tobacco data



100% Smoke-free COMMUNITIES in Mississippi
UPDATED | SEPTEMBER 2017

There Are **142** Smoke-Free MUNICIPALITIES and **(3)** Smoke-Free Counties IN MISSISSIPPI

*101 OF WHICH HAVE ORDINANCES THAT INCLUDE RESTRICTIONS ON ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Partial Smoke-free COMMUNITIES in Mississippi

- August 6, 1996 | West
- October 2007 | Greenville
- November 15, 2007 | McComb
- May 1, 2008 | Gulfport
- July 31, 2008 | Walls
- January 6, 2010 | Columbus
- June 3, 2010 | Goodman
- October 5, 2010 | Rieni
- June 2011 | Olive Branch
- June 6, 2012 | Vaiden
- July 3, 2014 | Gautier
- March 18, 2017 | Fulton

2017 • mississippi tobacco data



The Message Laboratory

The Message Laboratory

A new collaboration between the Social Science Research Center and the Department of Communication is researching communication science to better understand messages. The Message Laboratory is seeking to study messages and their effects, mainly in the fields of health and science communication.

By Alan Burns

With an ever-growing amount of information being presented to us in our daily lives, a new collaboration at the Social Science Research Center is seeking to better understand messages and their effects on recipients.

The Message Laboratory, created in the fall of 2016, is a collaboration between Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center and the Department of Communication. The lab is using multi-pronged approaches to carry out communication science research, mainly in the fields of health and science communication.

Dr. Holli Seitz, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, created the lab with the intention of having a space that could be used to study messages and serve as a home for collaborative research. Understanding how messages affect those who receive them, as well as how those messages can be altered to change the effects is one of the lab's main focal points.

"The initial idea was to take a message from development through implementation. As a message effects researcher, I thought about what the lab would need to encompass, from the initial stages of message development, all the way to the testing of the final message and its effects," says Seitz.

The lab will use three different approaches to communication research: first, interviews and focus groups will be used for formative research; second, manual

and automated text and content analysis will be used to look at large scale "big data" and social media; and third, online and in-person surveys and experimentation will be used to examine message effects.

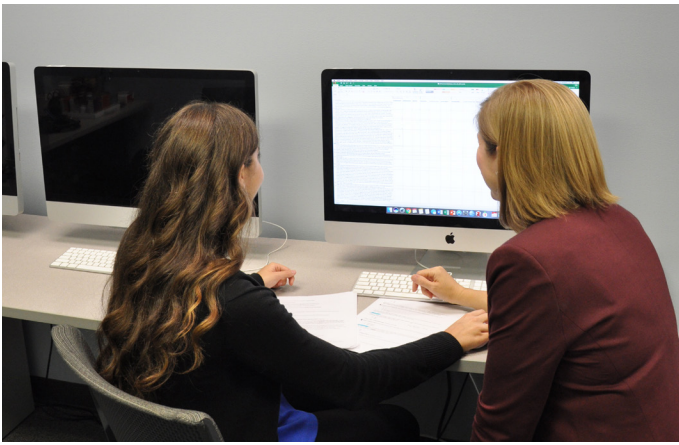
Collaboration and Student Research

As with many projects at the SSRC, The Message Laboratory is itself a joint effort; this one between the SSRC and the Department of Communication. Seitz explained that the lab is able to provide collaborative efforts on projects and research, adapting to the project and researcher needs.

"I see the space as a way to support and collaborate with projects in other domains," Seitz explains. "The idea of the lab slowly changed over time to incorporate what others may need. We want it to be home to both primary research and support for collaborative research."

Currently, she is working with a colleague in MSU's College of Veterinary Medicine on how medicinal marijuana research findings are communicated to audiences. Seitz anticipates using the lab and experiments to find the best way to communicate these research findings.

Along with collaborations, she sees the lab as a chance to foster undergraduate research at the university by offering fellowships to undergraduate students in the Department of Communication. Seitz sees the potential to expose the



ABOVE: Marisa Laudadio and Dr. Holli Seitz use a codebook and spreadsheet to manually code comments from online news articles.



department's students to different types of research and skills.

"We want to show them what communication research means, what it can encompass," she states. "We want them to be exposed to research careers and academic career paths, as well as practical application skills. If there is a topic they are passionate about pursuing, I want to be about to help them develop questions and research that topic."

Marisa Laudadio, a sophomore majoring in political science and communication with an emphasis in public relations, joined the lab in January 2017. Laudadio assists in the lab with coding user-generated comments on news stories pertaining to mammography and breast cancer. This past summer, she worked with Dr. Seitz to develop her own research questions and interests, particularly around international adoption.

"My work this summer was around my personal interests in international adoption, specifically looking at social media and user-generated comments on those platforms to understand public opinion around the issue," Laudadio explains. "What is the common discourse around the subject, are the perceptions accurate or are they actually misconceptions?"

Laudadio hopes to create a method of analysis that can be applied to any subject, allowing a researcher to collect data on a specific topic. That data could then be used to influence public policy or public discourse, directing the discussion to focus on the subjects that the public is talking about the most.

"The lab has completely helped change my goals since coming here, especially in showing me what social science is," she says. "Getting to work with Dr. Seitz has shown me that you can use training in communication to do research and work with messaging to help people. I love it and now plan to do research combining policy and advocacy in the future."

Dr. John Forde, head of the Department of Communication, also expressed interest in the laboratory's chance to help student research.

"We are always excited in the Department of Communication when our students have the opportunity to learn through research projects and internships," says Forde. "The Message Laboratory is a great example of this collaboration. Our partnership with the SSRC has been excellent, and we look forward to expanding that in years to come."

Mammography and Vaccine Misinformation Studies

One of the ongoing projects at The Message Laboratory is the study of messages around mammograms and breast cancer risk. After leaving the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Seitz went on to the University of Pennsylvania, where she completed her Doctorate in Philosophy in Communication. Her research focus and dissertation were on online news commentary's effects on women's decisions to get mammograms. Her interest in health communication and public health led her to also develop an interest in vaccine communication.

"Based on my public health background, I realized that vaccine communication was something that I was interested in and there was good research to be done around talking about vaccines and the science about them," Seitz explains.

In July 2017, Seitz started a new year-long project researching the effects of misinformation about vaccines in social media. The project is funded through a Henry Family Fund for Research Excellence grant.

"Unfortunately, we know that once someone has learned a piece of information, it is hard to unlearn it, even when you find out that it is false," says Seitz. "The long term goal of this research is how we can undo misinformation, but

first we must understand the effects that it has, as well as what makes these message with misinformation more memorable.”

Future of The Message Laboratory

Seitz sees the future of the laboratory as bright. Now that the lab has a physical space at the SSRC, she believes that the lab has a chance to grow with more room to take on projects, students, and more interdisciplinary collaboration.

“I’m wanting to expand the physiological components to help understand that side of message effects research,” she says. “Also, as the Department of Communication grows, if there is a graduate program, I would love to have a graduate student in the lab to pursue their own research.”

Dr. Art Cosby, Director Emeritus of the SSRC, believes the lab will play an important role in understanding communications research.

“Dr. Seitz’s concept of a new laboratory that focuses on the science of science communications is an extremely innovative and exciting new development for us at the SSRC,” he explains. “It is clear that we do not adequately understand how people accept and utilize many of the most important contributions of science. With this lab we are establishing a marker that Mississippi State desires to be one of the leaders in addressing this important new arena of communications research.”

Seitz sees science communication becoming a bigger piece of the lab’s function. She explains that there is a need for more research around not only understanding how we communicate the findings of science research, but understanding how the public reacts to that communication and how it can be improved.

“Expanding to science communication is going to be a big part of my professional future. We believe it will be important in the future and something that we should begin to study here.”

Visit commmlab.ssrc.msstate.edu for more information and updates from The Message Laboratory.

RIGHT: Examples of tweets used by Dr. Holli Seitz in her study of messages around mammograms and breast cancer risk.

 Komen Kansas City
@komenkansascity

Follow

Sign up for [#mammogram](#) and/or clinical breast exam reminder. [#MoreThanPinkKC](#) [#NBCAM](#) [#BreastCancer](#)
[apps.komen.org/Subscriber/new ...](https://apps.komen.org/Subscriber/new)

Get Screened.

- > Ask your doctor which tests are right for you.
- > Have a mammogram every year starting at age 40 if you are at average risk.
- > Have a clinical breast exam at least every 3 years starting at age 20, and every year at age 40.

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False positive mammogram readings are scaring many women off, study finds
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[#BreastCancer](#) survival rates have increased over time due to widespread mammography use + improvements in treatment!
goo.gl/twVpdT

**3.5 MILLION
EST. BREAST CANCER
SURVIVORS IN 2016**

AMERICAN CANCER
SOCIETY CANCER FACTS
& FIGURES 2017

MASEP Launches Sixth Edition Curriculum

The Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program has launched into its 45th year with the release of the sixth edition of their MASEP Curriculum.

By Alan Burns

From its beginning in 1972, the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program (MASEP) has strived to improve the safety of Mississippi's citizens and highways. The program is Mississippi's statewide driver improvement program that is required for first-time offenders convicted of driving under the influence.

MASEP is currently in its 45th year serving as the one of the few state-wide programs operationally in the country. The original MASEP curriculum was created in 1972 with funding from the Governor's Highway Safety Program, the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol, and the Mississippi Department of Health. Originally, the curriculum was presented as a lecture series, focusing on alcohol's effects and knowledge to prevent drinking and driving.

A study conducted by the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University (MSU) from 1975-1981 found that the program was having no significant impact on recidivism rates of offenders, which led to the creation of the 1989 edition of the MASEP curriculum. This new curriculum was created with a focus on research and theory for DUI offender rehabilitation, switching permanently from a lecture program to a group intervention approach program.

While court-mandated since the Implied Consent Law of 1981, the MASEP program was still optional until 2007. Offenders could suffer a 1-year suspension of their driver's license before having it reinstated, while not being required to participate in the class. This changed in 2007, when the state began requiring the program for offenders to have their license reinstated.

MASEP Launches the Sixth Edition

Over the course of the following 28 years, the curriculum has been heavily revised multiple times with small revisions done periodically. This year has seen the launch of the curriculum's sixth edition.

"We've always wanted to keep up with the literature," says Dr. Angela Robertson, Research Coordinator for the Research and Development (R&D) Unit of MASEP. "What is the science behind intervening with offenders, what are the latest trends? These questions are important to have an effective curriculum."



Robertson explains that each revision of the curriculum focuses on current trends in substance abuse and the latest research on alcohol, drugs, and health. The newest set of updates to the curriculum applies the new trends of rising opioid use and a shift in the program's attendees.

"Opioid use is on the rise. We did the research, as well as looked at what other studies have found, and decided we needed to include opioids in the curriculum along with alcohol, marijuana, and other prescriptions that people may have in their homes," says Robertson.

"We've also been seeing a trend in the number of females that are attending the program," she continues. "Historically, males have been the more common perpetrator of DUIs, but that gender gap is narrowing. It's narrowing slowly, but we're definitely seeing more female offenders."

Along with the changing trends, the program seeks feedback from an advisory board comprised of facilitators. These facilitators work in the field with offenders at the court-mandated classes.

"It's important that the people who are actually delivering the intervention have direct input into the program. They are in the field, they see what works and helps people the most," Robertson says.

Billy Brister, Assistant Director for MASEP Operations, serves in his role as a representation for the operations side of the project, acting as a liaison for the facilitators.

"We're where the rubber meets the road, so to speak," Brister explains. "We did a survey of the facilitators in 2016 and 2017 to figure out what they thought should be

modified in the curriculum. We can then present that to the R&D Unit and they can better prepare a curriculum based on what those in the field are experiencing.”

Robertson’s research shows that around 23% of those in the program have less than a high school education level, while around 33% have a high school education and 38% have a college level education.

“It becomes important to adjust the curriculum to present the information in the most accessible manner possible, making sure that the lessons are not above any specific comprehension level,” says Robertson.

Based on this research and facilitator input, the design for the last few editions, including the newest one, are very image heavy. The image and graphic heavy design allows MASEP to spread the messages as effectively as possible among all audiences.

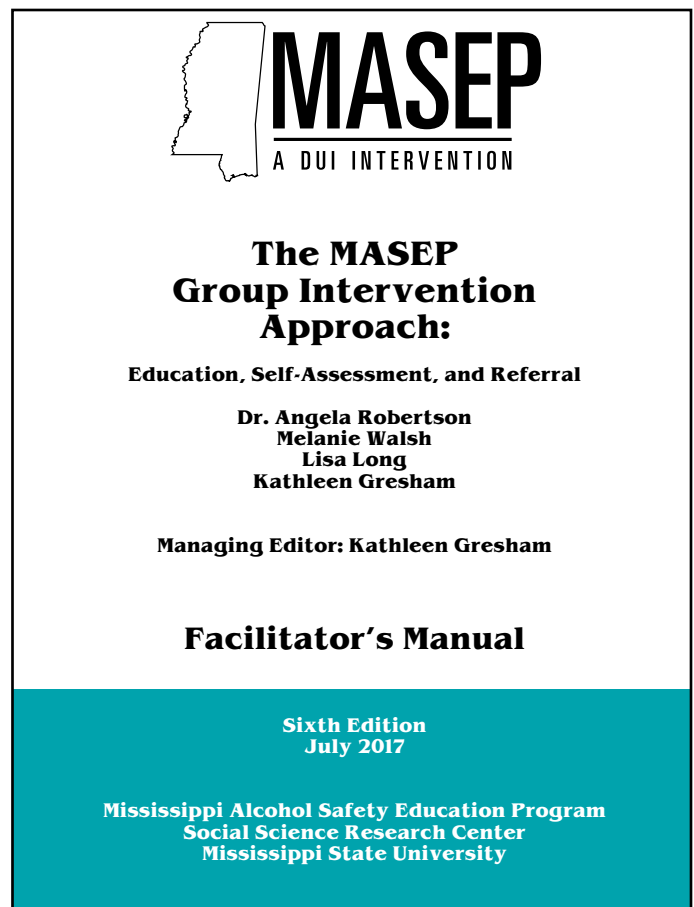
“We look at the literature and know what works, but then we have to figure out the best way to convey that to the general public,” Robertson says. “For example, we have an area focused on the Stages of Change that we believed we had in a great spot, but the facilitators came back to us with critiques that helped us create a more visually engaging and effective look for that section.”

The program also has a focus on applying behavioral change. Over the course of the four sessions of the program, two of them focus on bringing personal, individualized feedback to the offenders. In the first session, each attendee fills out an assessment on their personal life and abuse of substances. In the third session, this information is used to present each person with feedback that shows them their probabilities of being rearrested for DUI and how they can change their habits.

Robertson explains that MASEP is not a treatment program, but an intervention program. They follow a type of behavioral change known as SBIRT: screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment. This style of program is similar to kinds used by physicians. Evidence shows this has the potential to influence behavior change and Robertson hopes it can motivate individuals to make better choices.

The MASEP program is registered in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). NREPP is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) online database of over 300 programs that are based on research and evidence.

“We’re taking the research and applying it to our state’s population,” she says. “We do all of this research and make changes to the program to ensure that we have a reputable, fact-based program.”



Brister sees the future of the program as bright, noting that it has had a positive impact on the state and can continue to do so.

“MASEP has been proven to reduce recidivism,” he says. “Between the R&D Unit and the Operations staff, we do a great job and provide a great program for the state of Mississippi.”

Visit masep.org for more information on the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program’s history, research, and publications.

Social Relations Lab Develops Game to Study Social Rejection

A new game being developed by the Social Relations Collaborative is aiming to study the impact of social rejection among high school students. Roboball, a game involving social media, interaction, and decision making, is the next step in the three-year School Safety Project.

By Dylan McKee

Researchers at the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University are making new strides towards understanding bullying in schools.

The Reasons for Retaliation Research Project, also known as the School Safety Project, is prepping for the final year of a three-year study funded by the National Institute of Justice's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. This initiative hopes to improve social relations and the safety and well-being of students in schools by providing research-based solutions to the ongoing issue of bullying.

The third year of the grant, according to Dr. Sinclair and others, will focus on developing a behavioral social experiment to address the research question, "When does rejection trigger aggression?" Included in the paradigm, is a variation of Dr. Kipling D. Williams' "Cyberball." Williams produced the original program in 2000 which aimed to create a realistic experience of ostracism for use in laboratories interested in studying responses to social rejection within a controlled environment.

The development and experimental testing of the "Roboball paradigm," is led by Dr. Colleen Sinclair, an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology. Co-Principal Investigators on this grant include: Megan Stubbs-Richardson, Dr. Rebecca Goldberg, Dr. Tawny McCleon, and Dr. David May. Sierra Nelson, a graduate research assistant on the grant, has been instrumental in helping to develop the Roboball Paradigm with additional assistance from the researchers within the Social Relations Collaborative.

In the current adaptation, the Roboball game is part of a larger paradigm that uses a mixture of social media, video gaming, and interactions to simulate a virtual world in which students will interact. Megan Stubbs-Richardson, a Co-PI on this project, also notes that the addition of the immersive social media experience preceding the game is a novel addition to the traditional paradigm.

"In the beginning of the game, we have the students introduce themselves. They go through a phase where they create a profile composed of information about themselves, including hobbies and interests. Then there is a social media page where they have the option to "like" or "dislike" other players' profiles." Stubbs-Richardson says.

The game is meant to be as immersive as possible to heighten the realism of the paradigm simulating online contexts (e.g., online gaming, Snapchat) students often are a part of today.

"We can see by comparison how people respond to being included versus excluded in a virtual world. Stubbs-Richardson says, "For the social media component, being included is the equivalent of receiving a like. Not being recognized with a like is the equivalent of rejection because the student can also see that other players' profiles are receiving likes while they are not."

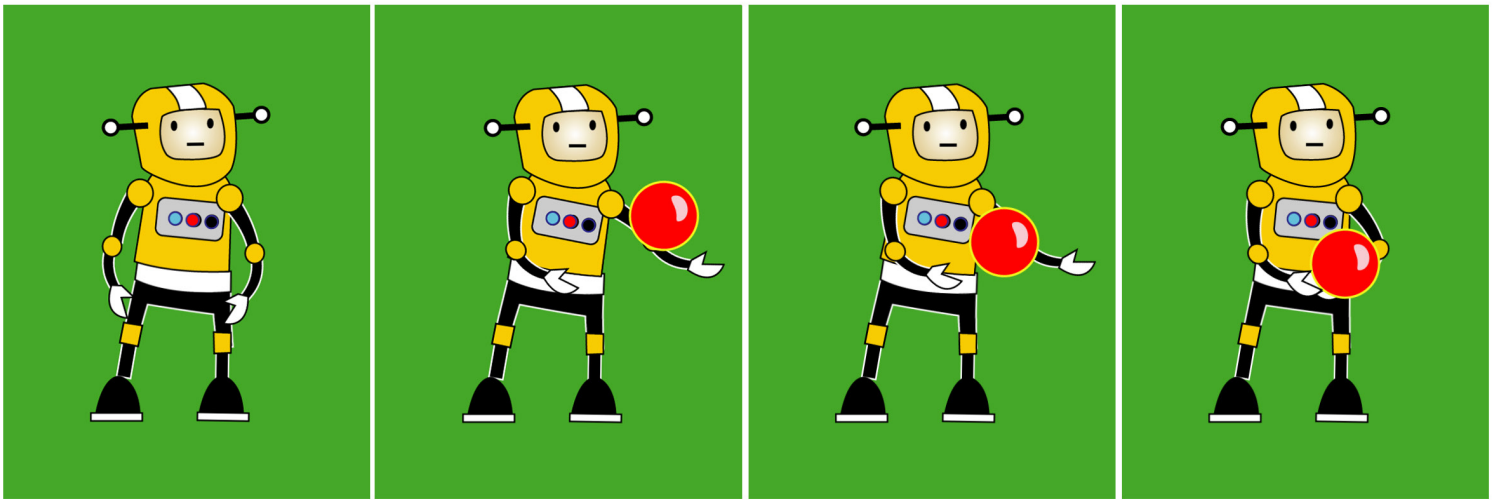
After students create their profile and interact with other students, they play the video game component of Roboball, which is a virtual version of a ball toss. Students will interact with one another within the game, along with AI. Within this virtual world, some students will experience inclusion from their peers (receiving the virtual ball an even number of times), while some will experience exclusion (getting left out of the catching game).

Although some may perceive that not being tossed a virtual ball hardly equates to experiencing bullying, Sinclair notes, "This paradigm is validated through extensive research. In social neuroscience, it has been shown that whenever people are excluded in the virtual ball toss, it activates the part of their brain that experiences social pain."

Knowing how the brain responds, the question of interest is how will students respond behaviorally to experiences of exclusion in this virtual setting?

While reflecting on the adaptations, Sinclair says, "Our study is also unique in that after experiencing inclusion or exclusion, we provide a range of behavioral response options. Where previous studies may have focused on aggressive responses or withdrawal, we examine positive, negative, and avoidant response types. Thus, participants of the Roboball Paradigm now have a full array of choices like they would in the real world."

This final aspect of the game includes a decision-making process where the student has the ability to choose from a list of actions based on how they feel after being included or excluded. After which, participants will be debriefed.



ABOVE: The designs of the robot used in the Roboball paradigm game. The robot is part of the video game section of the project, allowing players to take part in a virtual ball toss.

“After being included or excluded, they are asked, “What would you like to do next?” Stubbs-Richardson clarifies. “They can choose to “take one for the team” by opting to do a challenging task, get back at others for being left out, continue playing with others, or withdraw and stop. Regardless of the decision, once the decision is made the student will be informed that the game is over for the day.”

The decision itself is the key variable of interest and the team has hypotheses about which factors may make one person more likely to lash out whereas others withdraw. After all, this is the fundamental question of the project; what makes some kids retaliate when experiencing social rejection – like bullying – while others choose more positive coping? Thus the findings could have implications for understanding the problem of school shootings.

Sierra Nelson, a graduate research assistant on the project, explains that the project could see release in Fall 2017.

“We will pilot test on campus using Mississippi State students, then test with Starkville High students in 2018. After testing and modifying, we will include results in papers, presentations, infographs, blogs, and vlogs.”

Provided there are little to no hurdles in development throughout the testing and modifying phase, the team hopes to recruit a diversity of high school students to participate. Although the grant and research is specifically designed for the Starkville area, the application of the program could be used nationwide, or perhaps even globally.

“If the data we acquire to answer the research question is enlightening, then others who wish to use our model of the Roboball paradigm can. Given that they have similar resources; it could definitely be used by other researchers to find similar information. They could also attempt to alter different variables to discover different aspects of bullying we did not consider,” says Nelson.

Bullying is such an important issue in today’s society, given that it affects the lives of so many young people. Previous findings from the Reasons for Retaliation project show that between 25% - 60% of students report experiencing bullying at school. Further, a significant number of students report feeling alienated. These experiences carry an array of negative psychological and physiological consequences.

“If we can discover the paths that lead to positive coping over negative retaliation, we can develop interventions to encourage youth to choose the pro-social path over an anti-social one,” notes Sinclair.

Visit www.socialrelationslab.com for findings from year 1 of the School Safety Project and more information on the SRC’s other projects.



Social, Therapeutic & Robotic Systems Lab Partners with SSRC

The Social, Therapeutic & Robotic Systems Lab established a new partnership between the Social Science Research Center and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering this summer.

By Alan Burns

A new partnership at the Social Science Research Center is combining computer science and the social sciences to improve quality of life.

The Social, Therapeutic and Robotic Systems Lab (STaRS) was created in 2011 at Mississippi State University (MSU). Dr. Cindy Bethel, an Associate Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, Billie J. Ball Endowed Professor in Engineering, and Principal Investigator/Director for the STaRS Lab, began the project when she joined MSU in 2011.

She explains that the lab was created to research the use of technology, specifically robots, and how they can be used to assist people and improve the quality of life.

“We perform research associated with human-robot interaction, human-computer interaction and interface design, affective computing, and artificial intelligence,” says Bethel. “Our focus areas are in therapeutic robots, the

use of robots for gathering sensitive information especially from children, and robots integrated in law enforcement tactical teams.”

Dr. Bethel is joined by three Co-Principal Investigators: Drs. David May, Professor of Sociology, Deborah Eakin, Associate Professor of Psychology, and Melinda Pilkinton, Associate Professor of Social Work. The STaRS Lab has three graduate students: Zachary Henkel from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Kristen Stives from the Department of Sociology, and Ethan Flurry from the Department of Psychology. The lab also has several undergraduate students from the different departments.

The STaRS Lab is sustained through funding from both MSU and external entities. Grant funding for the lab has come from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Army Research Labs (ARL), Army Corp of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), U.S. Army

Tank Automotive Research Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC), FedEx, and Toyota Motor Corporation of Mississippi.

New Lab Space and Notable Projects

During the summer of 2017, the STaRS Lab moved into a newly renovated lab space at the SSRC. The new lab space features two data collection rooms with state of the art sensors and recording equipment, one robot operator room with control stations for running robots for two studies at the same time with the ability to control the sound and recording equipment in each data collection room, student work space, and a waiting room area for participants and parents of the children who may be participating in our studies. The graduate students also have a work space located outside of the lab in the SSRC.

Current projects in the STaRS Lab include a therapeutic dog known as Therabot, the use of robots to interview children on sensitive subjects, and work with law enforcement involving robot and technology interactions.

Therabot is the attempt by Dr. Bethel and her students to produce a robotic, therapeutic support system that is shaped like a stuffed dog. The dog can be used in clinical settings for support during therapy, especially for those with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. The project, which includes responsiveness towards sounds and users, was funded by the NSF.

The Use of Robots as Intermediaries for Gathering Sensitive Information from Children, known as the Interview Project, is seeking to learn if children are more comfortable sharing information with a robot compared to sharing with a human interviewer. The next phase of the project will look at understanding the willingness of a child to relay experiences with bullying using a toy-like humanoid robot (NAO) and a life-like humanoid robot (Zack or Hannah) to compare with a human interviewer. This project is also funded by the NSF.

In its work with law enforcement, the STaRS Lab has a project called the Lassie Project and also works with integrating technology and robots in with Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams. The Lassie Project involves building a prototype robot that is bullet resistant that can be used by law enforcement in different scenarios. This prototype is being built by students from Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Computer Science with future studies from Psychology, Criminology, and Sociology students.

“We are investigating whether technologies improve the stress levels of officers in training responses. We are looking at the use of distraction devices, such as strobe lights, flood lights, sirens, and other sounds, incorporated into a robot to provide added capabilities into their operations,” Bethel explains.

The Future of STaRS

Bethel notes that the partnership between the SSRC and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering is beneficial with the new opportunities it presents.

“My research brings together the technical aspects of computer science and studies how these developments will interact with and impact humans,” she says. “This is a wonderful blend of two very important disciplines and the SSRC provides resources for us to be able to perform his type of interdisciplinary research in a positive and supportive environment.”

The STaRS Lab also has a big hand in training future generations of researchers, says Bethel. They usually have around 30 students working on different projects in the lab and are involved in community outreach and activities that promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

In the future, Bethel sees the lab growing and developing. She foresees the lab expanding into related areas and topics for future research, filling a need in the area of technology and human interactions.

“We are here to develop research that will be helpful to the world and we hope to improve the quality of life for those who use our developments,” Bethel explains.



Visit www.stars.msstate.edu for more information on the lab's current projects, research team, and publications. For more information on Dr. Cindy Bethel and her research visit www.cindybethel.com.

Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory

Projects conducted by the Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory (SRL) during the past fiscal year covered a broad range of research topics. The SRL administered a census of animal shelters in the US, measured Mississippians' attitudes and knowledge of charter schools, assessed the health and quality of life of Amite County residents, and helped philanthropists better understand the landscape of nonprofit organizations in Mississippi. For nearly two decades, the SRL has conducted a client satisfaction survey with individuals receiving assistance from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. This year, the SRL began a similar client satisfaction survey for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. The SRL also continued its longitudinal measures of the social climate of tobacco control in Mississippi. Lastly, the SRL completed a large assessment of irrigation methods employed across the croplands of Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Mississippi. The following list provides additional details outlining the purpose of each survey project conducted during the past fiscal year:

Animal Shelters Survey

On behalf of the Shelter Medicine Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University and the Pet Leadership Council, the SRL conducted a census of more than 3,000 animal shelters across the nation. The goal of this research was to derive an estimate of the total number of dogs available for adoption in the US and develop a better understanding of the movement of these animals between shelters.

Amite County Community Health Survey

On behalf of the Public Health Program at Jackson State University, the SRL conducted a telephone-based survey of a representative sample of adults residing in Amite County, Mississippi. The purpose of this survey was gain a better understanding of the health and quality of life of Amite County residents. The results of this survey helped Jackson State University's public health initiative address major health and community issues in Amite County.

Cropland Irrigation Survey

On behalf of the Rice Research and Extension Center at the University of Arkansas, the SRL conducted a telephone-based survey of agricultural producers throughout the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, and Mississippi. With evidence suggesting that groundwater levels in the Mid-South US are in decline, the survey provided agricultural research scientists with estimates of the total number and types of systems being used irrigate croplands throughout the catchment area.

MAG/MCN WKKF Planning Grant Survey

In support of a planning grant from the W.K.Kellogg foundation to the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers and the Mississippi Center for Nonprofits, the SRL developed a survey to measure the attitudes and experiences of nonprofit and philanthropy leaders regarding cross-sector collaboration in grantmaking, programming, and reporting. This multi-modal study included both telephone- and web-based surveys of more than 200 organizational leaders from the full population of Mississippi's nonprofits and philanthropies.



Charter School Survey

In collaboration with Mississippi First, a non-profit organization specializing in education policy research and advocacy, the SRL developed a survey to measure public opinion and knowledge of charter schools. This telephone-based survey of the general public included a representative sample of 500 adults residing in the state of Mississippi.

2016 Mississippi Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control

For the Tobacco Control Unit at the Social Science Research Center, the SRL administered the 2016 Mississippi Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control. Results from this survey assisted researchers in better understanding the degree to which people in Mississippi live in smoke free homes, work in smoke free environments, understand the health risks of tobacco, dine in smoke free restaurants, and talk to their children about tobacco use. Funding for this research was provided by Mississippi State Department of Health. This telephone-based survey of the general public included a representative sample of 1,500 adults residing in the state of Mississippi.

2016 Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation Client Satisfaction Survey

On a quarterly basis, the SRL conducted telephone-based interviews with approximately 250 individuals who received vocational rehabilitation services from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) during the prior 12 months. This client satisfaction data assisted the MDRS in program evaluation and development.

2016 MDMH Consumer Satisfaction Survey

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH), the SRL conducted a paper-based survey of client satisfaction. For a two-week period, all clients receiving mental health services throughout the state of Mississippi were provided with an opportunity to share their opinions about the quality of services they received from MDMH. The results of this survey were used to improve the quality of MDMH services.

Grants & Contracts

New Grants & Contracts:

Baird-Thomas, C. (2016, December). "Mississippi Action Network for Uplifting Promise (MAN UP) Evaluation, Year 2," Tougaloo College.

Baird-Thomas, C. (2017, May). "Health Help Evaluation," Mississippi Health Advocacy Program.

Buffington, A. (2016, October). "Following the Data," Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Buffington, A. (2017, June). "Empowering Mentors to Promote Women's Retention (EMPOWR), Year 4," Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Campassi, M. (2016, July). "Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program Software Development Project," MASEP.

Cossman, R. (2017, May). "Mississippi HPV Vaccination Promotion, Year 3," National AHEC, Centers for Disease Control.

Gardner, S. (2016, August). "MSQII-2 Evaluation Project," Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Preventive Health.

Gardner, S. (2016, September). "The Business Case for Racial Equity in Mississippi," Altarum Institute.

Gardner, S. (2017, February). "Division of Youth Services 2016 Annual Report," Division of Youth Services.

Gardner, S. (2017, March). "Disproportionate Minority Contact Report," Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Guzmán, S. & Rico Méndez, G. (2017, June). "Study Abroad for Spanish Language and Exchange for Precision Agriculture," U.S. Department of State, Partners of the Americas, NAFSA -100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund Grant.

Hossfeld, L. & Rico Méndez, G. (2017, June). "Accessing Government Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers," Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center, Alcorn State University.

Ingram, R. & Cossman, R. (2016, December). "Social Indicators for Environmental Scientists," Environmental Protection Agency.

McMillen, D. (2016, July). "Pathfinders, Year 19," Office of

the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. & Valentine, N. (2016, July). "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," Mississippi State Department of Health.

McMillen, R. (2016, September). "Economic Impacts of Smoke-Free Ordinances on Sales Tax Revenue," American Heart Association.

McMillen, R. (2016, October). "Mississippi State University site for the Richmond Center Administrative Core, Year 6," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

Parrish, D. (2016, September). "Seat Belt, Motorcycle, and Child Restraint Observational Survey Project, Year 24," Mississippi Governor's Office of Highway Safety (NHTSA).

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2016, September). "Focus 4 Teens Evaluation, Year 2," Mississippi First, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ragsdale, K., Peterson, L., & Reynolds, D. (2016, September). "US Aid Soy, Year 4," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States Agency for International Development.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M., Reid, A., & Burns, M. A. (2017, March). "SIL Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Assessment," Soybean Innovation Lab.

Robertson, A. A. (2016, July). "MASEP Curriculum Revisions," Social Science Research Center.

Robertson, A. A. (2016, July). "Mississippi Translational Research on Interventions for Adolescents in the Legal System, Year 4," National Institutes of Health.

Robertson, A. A. & Baird-Thomas, C. (2016, September). "Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Delta Heart Disease Project," Mississippi Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Robertson, A. A. (2016, December). "Mississippi State Department of Health Asthma Control Program Evaluation," Mississippi State Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control.

Robertson, A. A. (2017, January). "Evaluation of the Second Chance Act Re-Entry Program for Adults with Co-occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders,"

Grants & Contracts

Mississippi Department of Mental Health, United States Department of Justice.

Robertson, A. A. (2017, June). "Mississippi Translational Research on Interventions for Adolescents in the Legal System (TRIALS) Research Center, Year 5," National Institutes of Health.

Seitz, H. (2017, May). "Vaccine Misinformation Study," College of Arts and Sciences Henry Family Research Fund for Excellence.

Sinclair, H. C., Goldberg, R., May, D., & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2016, December). "When does rejection trigger aggression? A multi-method examination of a multi-motive model, Year 2," National Institute of Justice.

Southward, L. (2016, August). "Mississippi Association of Grantmakers and Mississippi Center for Nonprofits Survey," Mississippi Association of Grantmakers.
Southward, L. (2017, January). "Mississippi KIDS COUNT," Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Southward, L. & Walker, B. (2017, February). "Get2College Evaluation," Woodward Hines Education Foundation.

Southward, L. & Walker, B. (2017, April). "Mississippi Health Insurance Coverage and Affordable Care Act Survey," Center for Mississippi Health Policy.

Walker, B. (2017, April). "Mississippi School Health Council Technical Assistance, Year 3," Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Ongoing Grants & Contracts:

Baird-Thomas, C. (2016, February). "Mississippi Action Network for Uplifting Promise (MAN UP) Evaluation," Tougaloo College.

Baird-Thomas, C. (2015, April). "Fatherhood Initiative Evaluation," Homby Zeller Associates, Inc., Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Baird-Thomas, C. (2016, January). "Fatherhood Initiative Evaluation Year 2," Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Buffington, A. (2015, July). "Mississippi KIDS COUNT Policy Grant," Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Buffington, A. (2015, September). "Empowering Mentors to Promote Women's Retention (EMPOWR), Year 2,"

Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Buffington, A. (2016, June). "Empowering Mentors to Promote Women's Retention (EMPOWR), Year 3," Women's Foundation of Mississippi.

Cossmann, R. (2015, May). "Mississippi HPV Vaccination Awareness Project," Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center, Centers for Disease Control.

Cossmann, R. (2016, February). "Mississippi HPV Vaccination Awareness Project, Year 2," Northern Nebraska Area Health Education Center, Centers for Disease Control.

Cross, G. (2015, September). "Partnerships to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for Children and Communities," National Institutes of Health.

Cross, G. (2015, October). "MS DUI Electronic Citation/Tracking System," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Cross, G. (2015, October). "MS eCite, DAR, and Callback System Maintenance," Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Cross, G. (2015, October). "eCite Supplemental Project," Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Gardner, S. (2015, March). "2014 Division of Youth Services Report," Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Gardner, S. (2016, February). "2015 Division of Youth Services Report," Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Gardner, S., Robertson, A., & Tatch, A. (2016, February). "2016 Disproportionate Minority Contact Report," Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Gardner, S. (2016, April). "Mississippi Quality Improvement Initiative 2 Evaluation," Mississippi State Department of Health.

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

Henderson, B. (2016, June). "2016 Mississippi DUI Forum," Social Science Research Center.

Grants & Contracts

Ongoing Grants & Contracts (continued):

McMillen, D. L. (2015, July). "Pathfinder, Year 17," Office of the Provost, Mississippi State University.

McMillen, R. (2015, July). "Surveillance and Evaluation Services for the Mississippi Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program," Mississippi State Department of Health.

McMillen, R. (2015, July). "Richmond Center of Excellence Data Sets," American Academy of Pediatrics, Flight Attendant Medical Research Center.

Parrish, D. (2015, October). "Seat Belt, Motorcycle Helmet, and Child Restraint Observational Survey, Year 23," Mississippi Governor's Office of Highway Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Ragsdale, K. (2015, October). "USAID," University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Laboratory, United States Agency for International Development.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. (2015, December). "Focus4Teens Evaluation," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mississippi First.

Robertson, A. A. (2015, July). "Mississippi TRIALS Research Center," National Institutes of Health.

Robertson, A. A. (2016, June). "MASEP Curriculum Revisions."

Robertson, A. A., Baird-Thomas, C., & McDoom, M. (2015, July). "Evaluation Services for Mississippi Delta Heart Disease Project," Mississippi Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control.

Robertson, A. A. & Baird-Thomas, C. (2015, September). "Mississippi Delta Heart Disease Project Evaluations," Mississippi State Department of Health.

Sinclair, H. C., Goldberg, R., May, D., McCleon, T., Mohanty, S., & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2015, December). "When does rejection trigger aggression? A multi-method examination of a multi-motive model," National Institutes of Justice.

Sinclair, H. C., Adams, H., Ellithorpe, C., & Goldberg, R. M. (2016, May). "Swipe White: Examining Sexual Racism in Online Dating," Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Southward, L. (2015, January). "Mississippi KIDS Count," Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS Count.

Southward, L. & Baird-Thomas, C. (2015, March). "Mississippi Data Project for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation," RTC, W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Southward, L. (2016, January). "Mississippi KIDS Count," Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS Count.

Southward, L. & Baird-Thomas, C. (2016, March). "Mississippi Interactive Data Project," W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Southward, L. (2016, May). "KIDS COUNT Integrated Data System," The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Walker, B. (2015, December). "Mississippi School Health Council Technical Assistance Project," Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi.



Publications

Bethel, C. L., Henkel, Z., Stives, K., May, D. C., Eakin, D. K., Pilkinton, M., & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2016, August). Using robots to interview children about bullying: Lessons learned from an exploratory study. In *Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN), 2016 25th IEEE International Symposium on* (pp. 712-717). IEEE.

Buffington, A. & Walker, B.H. (2016, September). Focus on attendance boosts student achievement -Mississippi schools reduce chronic absenteeism. Mississippi Department of Education, Jackson.

Buffington, A., Walker, B. H., McCown, J. S., Yigit, I., Barr, S. G. & Southward, L. H. (2017, April). Empty seats: Mississippi school attendance officers' perspectives on chronic absence. Available: <https://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Empty-Seats.reduced-size.pdf>.

Cosby, A. G. & Rico Mendez, G. (2016). The Emergence of a Data Intensive Society: The Opportunity for SURA to Provide Leadership in Developing Fundamental Breakthroughs in Integrative Modeling of Natural and Human Systems. Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) – Coastal and Environmental Research Committee (CERC), Raleigh, NC.

Cossmann, R. E. (2016). "Rurality Not the Determinant of Access to Primary Health Care in Mississippi." *The Frontiers of Applied Demography*. Edited by David Swanson. Springer, Pp: 239-248. ISBN: 978-3-319-43329-5.

Drouin, O., McMillen, R., Klein, J. D., & Winickoff, J. P. (2017). E-cigarette advice to patients from physicians and dentists in the U.S. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0890117117710876>.

Felmlee, D. & Sinclair, H. C. (in press). Social networks and personal relationships. Invited chapter for A. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Fowler, L., Neaves, T. T., Terman, J., Cosby, A. G. (2017). Cultural Penetration and Punctuated Policy Change: Explaining the Evolution of U.S. Energy Policy. *Review of Policy Research*. Doi: 10.1111/ropr.12240.

Kim, L., McGrath-Morrow, S., McMillen, R., & Collaco, J. M. (2017). Smoking Patterns and Perspectives of Families of Infants with Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia. *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, and Pulmonology*, 30, 26-30.

Matta, M. S., Porter, J. R., Chintakrindi, S., & Cosby, A. G. (2016). Addictive Behaviors and Chronic Pain in a High-Risk Population: The Simple and Confounding Effects of Multiple Addictive Diseases. *Journal of Drug Issues* 1-13. DOI 10.1177/0022042615623984.

McMillen R., O'Connor, K., Groner, J., Tanski, S., Park, E., Klein, J. D. (2017). Changes and Factors Associated with Tobacco Counseling: Results from the AAP: Results from the

AAP Periodic Survey of Fellows. *Academic Pediatrics*. 10.1016/j.acap.2017.01.002.

Mississippi Data Project Team (March 2017). Mississippi Data Project County Education/Suspension Data Fact Sheets: <https://msdatapoint.com/infographics/>.

Mississippi Data Project Team (February 2017). Education Suspended: An Overview of Student Suspensions in Mississippi's Schools: <https://msdatapoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Suspensions-Brief.pdf>.

Mississippi Data Project Team (February 2017). Education Suspended: An Overview of Student Suspensions in Mississippi's Schools: <https://msdatapoint.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Suspensions-Report.pdf>.

Mississippi KIDS COUNT project team. (2017, January). 2017 Mississippi Legislative Countdown Calendar: <http://bit.ly/2igaB7o>.

Mississippi Tobacco Data Laboratory. (April 2017). The Health & Economic Burden of Tobacco on Mississippi - <http://mstobaccodata.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/mtd-tobacco-report.pdf>.

Mississippi Tobacco Data Laboratory. (May 2017). Fact Sheet: 100% Smoke-Free Communities in Mississippi - <http://mstobaccodata.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ms-smoke-free-communities.pdf>.

Morse, D. T., & Robertson, A. A. (In Press). Psychometric properties of the Short Inventory of Problems (SIP) with adjudicated DUI intervention participants. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*.

Parrish, D. R., Suddoth, D., Smith, K. & Kammer, H. (2017). Seat Belt & Motorcycle Helmet Survey: November 2016. SSRC, MSU.

Ragsdale, K., Cross, G. W. (2016). Can Children's Museums Deliver Effective Health Outreach? Evaluation Results of the HealthWorks! Be A Food Groupie Program for Elementary Students. *Journal of Health Disparities Research & Practice*, 9(1), 137-152.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Wei, T. (2016). WEAI+ Final Results: Gender Equity in Soybean Production in Rural Ghana. USAID and the Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab. SSRC, MSU. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.1.1421.4005.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. (2016). Focus4Teens Quarterly Report: YR1 Youth Focus Groups. Mississippi First and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. SSRC, MSU.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. (2016). Focus4Teens YR1 Provider Interviews: AEH Clarksdale Community-Based Clinic. Mississippi First and the CDC. SSRC, MSU.

Publications

- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. (2016). Focus4Teens YR1 Provider Interviews: AEH Quitman School-Based Clinic. Mississippi First and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. SSRC, MSU.
- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. (2016). Focus4Teens YR1 Provider Interviews: AEH Tunic Community & School-Based Clinics. Mississippi First and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. SSRC, MSU.
- Ragsdale, K. & Reid, A. (2016). Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL): Ghana YR3 Trip Report. Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab. SSRC, MSU.
- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Wei, T., Martey, E., Goldsmith, P. (Under Review). Using the WEAI+ to explore gender equity among smallholder farmers: Baseline evidence from Ghana's Northern Region. *Journal of Rural Studies*.
- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. & Gochanour, A. (2016). Focus4Teens YR1 Evaluation: Summary Report. Mississippi First and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. SSRC, MSU.
- Ragsdale K., Read-Wahidi M. R., & Reid A. (2017). ICT4AgD & Soybean Farmers in Rural Ghana: Focus Group Discussion Results among Men and Women Smallholder Soybean Farmers in Ghana's Northern Region. USAID and the Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab. SSRC, MSU. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.13859.04646
- Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M., & Reid, A. (2017). *GRADA 2016: Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab, Gender Responsive Agricultural Development Assessment*.
- Read-Wahidi, M. R. & DeCaro, J. (2017). Gudalupan Devotion as a Moderator of Psychosocial Stress among Mexican Immigrants in the Rural Southern United States. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.
- Rico Méndez, G. & Wilches, J. A. (2016, September 12). Los problemas del "sí" y el "no" para comunicar sus mensajes. *Razón Pública*(*).
- Rico Méndez, G. (2017). "ZIDRES Law: Emergent Normative Foundation of State Legitimacy in Rural Areas in Colombia". *Ciudad Paz-ando*, 10.1, pp. 7-19
- Rico Mendez, G., Stubbs-Richardson, M., Mohanty, S. & Cosby, A. G. (Forthcoming). "Implications of Social Media on Disaster Response: Commentary on the Flint Twitterverse" in Stabile, B. & Neaves, T.T. (Eds.). TBA. Washington, D.C.: George Mason University.
- Seitz, H. H., Gibson, L., Skubisz, C., Forquer, H., Mello, S., Schapira, M. M., Armstrong, K., Cappella, J. N. (2016). Effects of a risk-based online mammography intervention on accuracy of perceived risk and mammography intentions. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 99, 1647-1656. doi: 10.1016/j.pec.2016.05.005
- Shope, T. R., Walker, B. H., Aird, L., Southward, L.H., McCown, J. S. & Martin, J. M. (2017). Pandemic Influenza Preparedness among Child Care Center Directors in 2008 and 2016. *Pediatrics*, 139, 1-8. doi:10.1542/peds.2016-3690
- Southward, L. H., Bell, L., Buffington, A., Harris, C., McCown, J. S., Walker, B. H., Yigit, I., & Zollicoffer, A. (March 2017). 2017 Mississippi KIDS COUNT Fact Book: <http://bit.ly/2wgti2n>.
- Stubbs-Richardson, M., Sinclair, H. C., Goldberg, M., Ellithorpe, C., & Amadi, S. (2017). Reaching out versus lashing out: Examining gender differences in experiences with and responses to bullying in high school. Forthcoming in *American Journal of Criminal Justice*.
- Stubbs-Richardson, M., Rader, N. E. & Cosby, A. G. (Forthcoming). Tweeting rape culture: Examining portrayals of victim blaming in discussions of sexual assault cases on Twitter. *Feminism & Psychology*, special issue on "Feminisms and Social Media."
- Wright, L. D., Nichols, C. R., Cosby, A. G., & D'Elia, C. F. (2016, August 29). Collaboration to Enhance Coastal Resilience. *Eos*, 97, doi:10.1029/2016EO057981.
- Wright, L. D., Nichols, C. R., Cosby, A. G., Danchuk, S., D'Elia, C. F. & Rico Mendez, G. (2016). Trans-disciplinary Collaboration to Enhance Coastal Resilience: Envisioning a National Community Modeling Initiative. Washington, DC: Coastal and Environmental Research Committee, Southeastern Universities Research Association. 30 pp. Available: <http://scholarworks.uno.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=resilience>.

Presentations

Abernathy, T. (August, 2017). *Presentation on the significant relationship between class attendance and academic success.* Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia.

Abernathy, T. (2017). *Pathfinders Student Retention Research Program.* Social Science Research Center and Mississippi State University Campus, Starkville, Mississippi.

Amadi, S.**, Sinclair, H. C., & Krallman, A. (2017). *Repair, retreat, or retaliate: An initial test of the full Multimotive Model linking rejection and aggression.* Poster submitted for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference in San Antonio, TX. (*Winner of SPSP Student Travel Award.)

Bailey, A., & Abernathy, T. (2016, November). *How important is class attendance? A collaborative initiative at Mississippi State University targeted toward freshman students answers with results.* SACSA - Southern Association for College Student Affairs, Jacksonville, Florida.

Belenko, S., Robertson, A. A., Dennis, M., & Welsh, W. (August 1-3, 2016). *Use of Behavioral Health Services Cascade Data to Identify Unmet Substance Use Treatment Services Needs among Adolescent Offenders.* Symposium presentation at the 23rd NIMH Conference on Mental Health Services Research, Bethesda, MD.

Bethel, C. L., Henkel, Z., Stives, K., May, D. C., Eakin, D. K., Pilkinton, M., Jones, A., & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2016). *Using robots to interview children about bullying: Lessons learned from an exploratory study.* IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication (RO-MAN 2016).

Anne Buffington presented an IGNITE presentation at the "Following the Data" policy group convening in San Antonio, Texas on Thursday October 27th. Buffington presented information about Mississippi KIDS COUNT's work related to chronic absence in Mississippi's public schools.

Byrne, D. M., Bauza, V., Lardizabal, A., Trimmer, J., Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M.R., Reid, A., & Guest, J. S. (2017, April). *Elucidating links between agricultural intensification and exposure to chemical and biological contamination in rural villages of Northern Ghana.* Poster. 23rd Annual Environmental Engineering & Science (EES) Symposium, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL.

Chang, H., Buffington, A., & Walker, B. H. (April, 2017). *Reducing chronic absence: Why should we care, what can we do?* Keynote presentation given at the Mississippi Department of Education's first annual Chronic Absenteeism Summit, Meridian, MS.

Cossmann, R. E., Keith, S., James, W., & Albrecht, P. (2016, November 17). *Application of General Strain Theory to the Ultimate Health Outcome - Death.* Presented at the American Society of Criminology's 72nd Annual Meeting. New Orleans, LA.

Ellithorpe, C., & Sinclair, H. C. (2016, July). *To replicate or not to replicate? That is no longer the question regarding the Romeo and Juliet effect.* Presented at the International Association for Relationship Research (IARR), Toronto, ON.

Gardner, S. (2016, August). *Changes in DUI law: An examination of a nonadjudication option.* Presented at 201 Traffic Records Forum, Baltimore, Maryland.

Guzman, S., Cossmann, R., and Ingram, R. (2017, April 11-12). *Social Indicators: A Rapid and Inexpensive Tool to Measure Change Among Hypoxia Stakeholders.* Poster presented at the 2017 Mississippi Water Resources Conference, Jackson, MS.

Harris, C., Buffington, A., & McMillen, R. (2017). *State-Wide Tobacco Reporting and Progress System (TRAPS).* Breakout Session presented at the National Conference on Tobacco OR Health, Austin, TX.

Laudadio, M. & Seitz, H. (2017, April). *Voices of adoption: An analysis of comments on a proposed international adoption rule.* Presented at the Shackouls Honors College Undergraduate Research Symposium, Mississippi State, MS.

Loehwing M, Ragsdale, K., Breazeale, M. (2016). *Minding the (Funding) Gap: YR2 of Successfully Mobilizing Service-Learning to Sustain eHealth Outreach to African American Teen Moms.* Accepted Oral Presentation. 2016 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing & Media, August 23-25. Atlanta, GA.

McClelland, E., McMillen, R., Huell, M., & Bryant, J. (2017). *Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control: Identifying Support for Tobacco Control Policies in Mississippi.* Poster presented at the National Conference on Tobacco OR Health, Austin, TX.

Presentations

McMillen, R., Winickoff, J. P., Tanski, S., Wilson, K., Klein, J. D. (2016). *Beliefs about the potential harms and smoking cessation potential of e-cigarettes*. Poster presented at the 143rd Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

McMillen, R., Gottlieb, M., Tanski, S., Wilson, K., Winickoff, J. P., Klein, J. (2016). *Household rules about e-cigarette use and beliefs about harms to children*. Poster presentation at the 2016 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition, San Francisco, CA.

McMillen R (2016). *Harrah's Casino New Orleans: Six months after implementation of a smoke-free ordinance*. Oral Presentation presented at the 143rd Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

McMillen, R., Winickoff, J. P., Gottlieb, M., Tanski, S., Wilson, K., & Klein, J. (2016). *Public Support for Smokefree Section 8 Public Housing*. Poster presented at the 143rd Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

McMillen, R., Winickoff, J. P., Tanski, S., Wilson, K., & Klein, J. D. (2016). *Beliefs about the potential harms and smoking cessation potential of e-cigarettes*. Poster presented at the 143rd Annual Conference of the American Public Health Association, Denver, CO.

McMillen, R., McClelland, E., & Valentine, N. (2017). *Surveillance informing policy and practice*. Poster presented at the National Conference on Tobacco OR Health, Austin, TX.

McMillen, R., Wilson, K., Tanski, S., Klein, J. D., Winickoff, J. P. (2017). *U.S. Adult Attitudes and Practices About Smoking Restrictions and Child Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, 2000-2015*. Poster presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

McMillen R. (2017). *Using Databases in Tobacco Research*. Invited presentation at the Pediatric Tobacco Issues Special Interest Group at the Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Morse, D. T., & Robertson, A. A. (2017). *Psychometric properties of the Short Inventory of Problems (SIP) with adjudicated DUI intervention participants*. *Psychology of addictive behaviors*, 31(1), 110.

Nelson, S., Stubbs-Richardson, M., & Richardson, J. (2017). *Tweeting Politics: An Analysis of Tweets on the Incarceration*

of Immigrants. Presented at the Immigration, Migrants, and Refugees seminar in Peristil of the University of Split, Croatia.

Parrish, D. & Solomon, M. (2016, August). *Occupant Protection: Collecting and Analyzing Data*. Presented at the 4th Annual Mississippi Safety Training and Recognition Symposium, Biloxi, MS.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Gochanour, A., Reid, A. (2016). *Soybean Uptake in Rural Ghana: Ghana SUNS-Wave I Preliminary Results*. Third Annual Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab Researcher Retreat. December 12-14, 2016. Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A., Feher, E., Miller, S., Burse, N., Coleman, M., Schlanger, K., Mueller, T., & Tevendale, H. (2016). *Focus4Teens YR1 Results: Using Teen Focus Groups to Inform Pregnancy Prevention among Mississippi Delta Teens*. Breakout Session Panel. 2016 National Reproductive Health Conference, July 24-27, Chicago, IL.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., & Reid, A. (2016). *WEAI+ Final Results: Gender Equity in Soybean Production in Rural Ghana*. USAID/Ghana Mission, American Embassy. July 6, Accra, Ghana.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., & Reid, A. (2016). *Feed the Future Lab Soybean Innovation Lab: Ghana Soybean Uptake & Network Survey (SUNS)-Wave I: Enumerator Training Workshop I*. USAID. June 20-22, 2016. Saboba District/Chereponi District, Ghana.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A. (2016). *Feed the Future Lab Soybean Innovation Lab: Ghana Soybean Uptake & Network Survey (SUNS)-Wave I: Enumerator Training Workshop II*. USAID. June 27-28, 2016. Tolon District / Karaga District, Ghana.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Harper, S. K, & Reid, A. (2016). *Can Mobile-Responsive Resources Help Optimize Infant Feeding Outcomes Among Rural Minority Teen Mothers? Results from the eBaby Phase II Survey*. Oral Presentation. 2016 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, October 29-November 2, Denver, CO.

Ragsdale, K., Cross, G. W., & Reid, A. (2016). *Effectiveness of a Community-Based Health Education Program Delivered to Resource-Limited 3rd-, 4th- and 5th-Graders*. Poster Presentation. 2016 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, October 29-November 2, Denver, CO.

Presentations

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A., Feher, E., Miller, S., Burse, N., Coleman, M., & Schlanger, K. (2016). *The Focus4Teens Initiative: Developing Theory-Driven YR1 Needs Assessment Tools for Teen Pregnancy Prevention in Mississippi's Delta*. Accepted Oral Presentation. 2016 National Conference on Health Communications, Marketing & Media, August 23-25. Atlanta, GA.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A., Feher, E., Miller, S., Burse, N., Coleman, M., Schlanger, K., Mueller, T., & Tevendale, H. (2016). *Focus4Teens YR1 Results: Using Teen Focus Groups to Inform Pregnancy Prevention among Mississippi Delta Teens*. Breakout Session Panel. 2016 National Reproductive Health Conference, July 24-27, Chicago, IL.

Ragsdale, K., Read-Wahidi, M. R., Reid, A., Feher, E., Miller, S., Burse, N., Coleman, M., Schlanger, K., Mueller, T., & Tevendale, H. (2016). *Focus4Teens YR1 Results: Using Teen Focus Groups to Inform Pregnancy Prevention among Mississippi Delta Teens*. Poster Presentation. 2016 National Reproductive Health Conference, July 24-27, Chicago, IL.

Ragsdale, K. (2017). *Gender Equity in Agriculture/Aquaculture Development*. Mississippi State University-FAO Blue Growth Roundtable. UN Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) Liaison Office for North America. June 6, Washington, DC.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. R. (2017). *Gender Empowerment in Agricultural Development: Soybean Innovation Lab*. USAID. June 28, Washington, DC.

Ragsdale, K. & Read-Wahidi, M. R. (2017). *Gender Empowerment in Agricultural Development: Soybean Innovation Lab*. USAID Joint Meeting of the Feed the Future Innovation Labs: Soybean Innovation Lab, Nutrition Innovation Lab & Post-Harvest Loss Innovation Lab. National Press Club. June 28, Washington, DC.

Rico Méndez, G. (2017, January). *Data-Intensive Technologies: Tools for the Classroom*. Workshop prepared for faculty of Political Science and International Relations Department at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education. Monterrey (Mexico).

Rico Méndez, G. (2017, March). *Food security narrative and its effects on land governance: Case study of agricultural policies for oil palm in Colombia*. Presented at Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty. Responsible Land Governance: Towards an Evidence Based Approach, Washington, D.C. (March 20-24).

Robertson, A. A. (2016, July). *Using Data to Inform DUI Policy*. Oral presentation at the Mississippi DUI Forum, Jackson, MS.

Robertson, A. A. (2016, August). *The Potential of Juvenile Drug Courts*. Oral Presentation at the Mississippi Association of Drug Court Professionals Annual Training Conference, Tupelo, MS.

Robertson, A. A., Johnson, K., & Peyton, D. (2016, October). *STI Testing among Adolescents in Mississippi*. Oral presentation at the MS Public Health Association's 79th Public Health Conference and Annual Meeting, Jackson, MS.

Rutland, S. Walker, B. H., McCown, J. S., & Southward, L. H. (2016, October). *A contextual analysis of racial disparities in food access between black and white Mississippi adults*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Demographic Association.

Seitz, H. H. (2016, August). *Close calls and lives saved: A content analysis of exemplars in user-generated commentary on mammography news coverage*. Paper presented at the National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media, Atlanta, GA.

Seitz, H. H. (2016, November). *Effects of online mammography news commentary on reader mammography intentions*. Paper presented at the National Communication Association 102nd Annual Convention, Philadelphia, PA.

Seitz, H. H., Gibson, L., Skubisz, C., Mello, S., Schapira, M. M., Armstrong, K., & Cappella, J. N. (2017, April). *Immediate and long-term effects of a risk-based online mammography decision intervention on predictors of mammography behavior*. Paper presented at the DC Health Communication Conference, Fairfax, VA.

Seitz, H. H. (2017, May). *Effects of Online Mammography News Commentary: Comment Characteristics Shape Reader Risk Perceptions*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA.

Sinclair, H. C., Goldberg, R., Wu, S., Krallman, A., & Ellithorpe, C. (2016, July). *Advice & Attributions: Examining the relationship sense-making process between friends*. Presented at the International Association for Relationship Research (IARR), Toronto, ON.

Presentations

Sinclair, H. C. & Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2017, May). *Alienated by Groups: Findings from the Reasons for Retaliation Project*. Invited talk for the National Institute of Justice Comprehensive School Safety Initiative conference in Washington D. C.

Southward, L. H. & Harris, C. (2016, July). *Oral presentation titled "Mississippi KIDS COUNT Updates: Child Health, Chronic Absenteeism & County Rankings."* Natchez Convention Center. Presented at the Mississippi Early Childhood Education conference.

Southward, L. H. *Children's Health: How are we Doing? Using Mississippi KIDS COUNT Data*. July 22, 2016. Mississippi Health Summit, Hattiesburg, MS.

The SSRC hosted the quarterly meeting of the Mississippi Association of Grantmakers (MAG) in its Canton, MS office on October 14, 2016. Dr. Linda Southward of the Family and Children Research Unit provided an overview of the "Transfer of Wealth" study.

Southward, L. H. (2016, November). *Healthy Futures: Engaging the Oral Health Community in Childhood Obesity*. Prevention National Conference, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. Dr. Linda Southward was a reactor/discussant to the panel presentation "Overview of the Science" regarding non-modifiable and modifiable risk factors related to childhood obesity and health equity issues

Southward, L. H. & Harris, C. (2016, November). *Oral presentation entitled "How are We Doing? Using Mississippi KIDS COUNT Data"* at Jackson State University. Presented at the 12th Annual Mississippi Excel BY 5 Summit.

Southward, L. H. (2017, February). *Chronic Absenteeism in Mississippi: How Are We Doing?* Presentation at the CREATE Foundation's Dropout Prevention Summit, Tupelo, MS.

Southward, L. H. (2017, March). *The Importance of Contextual Factors in Early Childhood Development*. Presentation at the Southern Early Childhood Conference, Biloxi, MS.

Stives, K., May, D., Bethel, C., Pilkinton, M., Eakin, D., Stubbs-Richardson, M., Jones, A., Henkel, Z., Hutchins, B., Kelly, J., Williams, J., & Hollis, D. (2016). *What Do Parents' Tell Their Children About Responding to Bullying?: A Qualitative Analysis*. Presentation at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Meeting, Denver, Colorado.

Stubbs-Richardson, M., Harris, C. & Haynes, S. (2016). *A Spatial Analysis of Rape and Sexual Assault Discussions on Twitter*. Presented at the American Society of Criminology in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Stubbs-Richardson, M. (2017, April). Guest Speaker for the Mississippi State University event, *Hands Off!: A Hands-On Approach to Harassment*. Event sponsored by Student Counseling Services, the Montgomery Leadership Program, and the Department of Psychology.

Tatch, A., Walsh, M., & Robertson, A. A. (2017, February). *Using Churches to Cut Cardiovascular Disease: An Exploratory Study in the Mississippi Delta*. Presented at the Annual Meetings of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association; Jackson State University, Jackson, MS.

Valentine, N. & McMillen, R. (2017). *Changing Tobacco Trends in Mississippi*. Poster presented at the National Conference on Tobacco OR Health, Austin, TX.

Walker, B. H. & Brown, D. C. (2016, October). *What does self-rated health really mean? The shifting importance of physical and mental health in self-rated health across age*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Southern Demographic Association.

Awards & Recognitions

Mr. Alan Burns received a PRISM Award from the Starkville/MSU Public Relations Association of Mississippi (PRAM) for the submission of the 2016 Annual Report.

A feature story written by **Mr. Alan Burns** and **Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale**, “*Gender Equity and Soybean Farmers in Rural Ghana*” was featured on the Feed the Future’s Agrilinks website: <https://agrilinks.org/blog/gender-equity-and-soybean-farmers-rural-ghana>.

Mr. Alan Burns won a PRISM Award from the Public Relations Association of Mississippi (PRAM) for the 2016 SSRC Annual Report during the 2017 PRAM State Conference.

The **EMPOWR Project** was featured in the *Meridian Star*: http://www.meridianstar.com/community/education/mccs-empowr-celebrates-first-year/article_2e809d35-75f7-55fe-960c-05fae10c3804.html.

Dr. Sandra Guzman and **Dr. Ronald E. Cossman** had their conference poster, “Social Indicators: A Rapid and Inexpensive Tool to Measure Change Among Hypoxia Stakeholders,” featured on the Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute’s Twitter account (@MS_WRRI), as well as a story about the project in their 2016 Annual Report.

Dr. Sandra Guzman and **Dr. Ronald E. Cossman** had their conference poster featured in the article, “*Mississippi Water Resources Conference 2017*,” on the Gulf Restoration Network’s website: <http://healthygulf.org/blog/mississippi-water-resources-conference-2017>.

Mississippi Tobacco Data was featured in an article by the *Daily Journal* about 10 years with the indoor smoking ban in Northeast Mississippi: http://www.djournal.com/news/local/indoor-smoking-bans-hit-a-decade-in-northeast-mississippi/article_6fda3457-6c6e-5de6-ad10-f728eb9743f3.html.

A photograph by **Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale** of soybean market women in Ghana’s Chereponi District was chosen for the 2017 Challenge of Change Report published by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The photo of the market seller was taken while conducting research for the USAID-funded Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL).

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and **Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi**’s work in Ghana to address soybean and gender equality issues were part of a feature article in *The Reflector*.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was recognized for 10 years of service to MSU at the 2017 MSU DAFVM Service Recognition Event on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was recognized by MSU for her service on the Challenge of Change commission, which was established by the APLU: <http://www.msstate.edu/newsroom/article/2017/05/msu-continues-role-helping-universities-work-toward-global-food-security/>.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was invited to serve as a NIH Reviewer on the Special Emphasis Panel, NIMHD Specialized Centers of Excellence on Minority Health and Health Disparities (U54), by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, NIH on May 22, 2017.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was invited to attend the CDC-DRH Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grantee Meeting, which was organized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Reproductive Health (DRH) in Savannah, GA, on June 14-15, 2017.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was invited to serve as a Working Group Member, Challenge of Change: Engaging Public Universities to Feed the World, APLU International Programs. The meeting was organized by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) in Washington, D.C., on August 29-30, 2016.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale was invited to participate in the Designing for Behavior Change Workshop. The meeting was organized USAID/Food for Peace, Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program and the Food Security and Nutrition Network in Washington, D.C., on August 22-26, 2016.

Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and **Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi**’s work in Ghana was featured in *Seed World* in an article written by Dennis Thompson entitled, “*She Just Laughed: Understanding Culture and Ghanaian Women Farmers*”: <http://seedworld.com/she-just-laughed/>.

Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi’s work among Mexican migrant poultry workers in Mississippi was featured in *The Wallstreet Journal* in an article written by Melvin Konner entitled, “*In Tough Times, Religion Can Offer a Sturdy Shelter*”: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-tough-times-religion-can-offer-a-sturdy-shelter-1498829765>.

Ms. Audrey Reid won the 2017 Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award from the Department of Sociology’s Annual Awards Banquet on April 20th, 2017.

Awards & Recognitions

Dr. Angela Robertson became a member of the DUI Information Exchange Improvement Advisory Committee which was established by Senate Bill 2777 DUI Modernization and Technology Act to address the problem of a lack of timely information regarding DUI arrests and convictions being available to law enforcement, prosecutors and courts.

Dr. Holli Seitz received a Top Student Paper Award from the Health Communication Division at the National Communication Association 102nd Annual Convention, held in Philadelphia, PA, for her paper “Effects of online mammography news commentary on reader mammography intentions.”

Dr. Holli Seitz was selected to attend the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation New Connections Research Coaching Clinic in Denver, Colorado.

Dr. Linda Southward was asked to be an Advisory Board member of Mississippi’s Campaign for Grade Level Reading and attended the Press Conference at Jackson, MS. November 29, 2016.

Dr. Linda Southward accepted on behalf of Mississippi KIDS COUNT the Hugh I. Peck Memorial Research Award at the 2017 Mississippi Education Partnership Conference PREPS Award Ceremony on Thursday, March 2, 2017 in Jackson, MS.

Dr. Linda Southward received the MAFES Grantsmanship Award at the MAFES luncheon on the MSU campus on March 28, 2017.

Dr. Linda Southward was recognized for her service to MSU at the 2017 MSU DAFVM Service Recognition Event on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

Dr. Linda Southward was featured in multiple news articles relating to the 2017 KIDS COUNT Fact Book. These were in the *Columbus Dispatch*, *Clarion Ledger*, *Daily Journal*, and *Daily Journal Opinion*.

Ms. Megan Stubbs-Richardson won the 2017 Outstanding Doctoral Student Award from the Department of Sociology’s Annual Awards Banquet and AKD Induction Ceremony on April 20th. Ms. Stubbs-Richardson is completing her doctoral degree in Sociology with a research emphasis on gendered violence and victimization, adolescent victimization, and both the pro-social and anti-social uses of social media to either support or blame victims of crime.

Ms. Katelyn Swiderski was selected to participate in a Summer Internship at the Social Science Research Center under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen Ragsdale and Dr. Mary Read-Wahidi.

A recent survey by the **Wolfgang Frese Survey Research Laboratory** on canine shelter populations for the College of Veterinary Medicine was featured in multiple news outlets: *MSU Newsroom* and *WTVA*.

Anna Zollicoffer was awarded a scholarship for placing first in a student graphic design competition called Make it in Mississippi. This was the first year of the scholarship competition that was hosted by Mabus Advertising Agency. Anna’s campaign will be used to promote Mabus Agency and encourage people to stay in Mississippi to make it a better place.

DESIGN

M. Alan Burns

Discrimination based upon race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated. Discrimination based upon sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.



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