



**HIGHER, ADULT, AND LIFELONG EDUCATION**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



# GRADUATE RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

FEBRUARY 13, 2021

HIGHER, ADULT, AND LIFELONG EDUCATION  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

College of Education  
Department of Educational Administration



**@HALEatMSU**  
**#GRC2021**

# **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**1:00–1:20 pm** Welcome & Introductions

**1:20–1:30 pm** Break

**1:30–2:45 pm** Paper Presentation Panels

**2:45–2:50 pm** Break

**2:50–3:00 pm** Closing

## **2021 GRC COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

Dr. Brendan Cantwell  
(HALE Unit Coordinator & Associate Professor)

Alyssa Stefanese Yates  
(Doctoral Candidate & Graduate Assistant)

Countless GRC Volunteers !

## **PRESENTATION CODES**

***Located at the end of each abstract***

QL - Qualitative QN - Quantitative M - Mixed Methods

1:30 to 2:45 pm

## **Breakout Room 1: Higher Education & Communities**

*Moderator: Erica Fiasky*

### **University Urban Development and Gentrification Vulnerability:**

#### **A Descriptive Analysis of Development Decisions and Perceptions of Blight**

**Dr. Paul Garton (HALE Alum)**

Universities have been an integral part of urban development projects since the 1960s, but the discourse surrounding which neighborhoods are in need of development is contested terrain, structured by racism and classism. I apply a gentrification vulnerability scale to decennial census data and the American Community Survey to study whether census tracts targeted by university-led urban development initiatives are more vulnerable to gentrification prior to the initiative than those that are not targeted. I find targeted tracts are more vulnerable, and this is discussed within the literature of gentrification and the discourse surrounding blight and poverty. (QN)

### **Examining Off-Campus Students' Sense of Belonging and Behaviors in a Town-Gown Context**

**Dr. Erin H. Carter (HALE Alum)**

This dissertation study emerged from an interest in addressing student behavior issues in town-gown communities and the practical need to know more about off-campus students as central actors in these behaviors. Utilizing hierarchical regression analyses, the study explored off-campus students' sense of belonging to the local community, and in turn, how sense of belonging influenced positive and negative behaviors in the town-gown context. The study findings and discussion offer insights and direction for higher education administrators tasked with creating policy and practical interventions aimed at supporting off-campus students, while also addressing the unique challenges stemming from student behaviors in the local community. (QN)

### **Finding, Creating, and Following Footprints:**

#### **The Integration of Indigenous Knowledge in Palau Community College**

**Dr. Joy Hannibal (HALE Alum)**

Little research exists on the specific ways that Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing are integrated in institutions of higher education across Micronesia (Pacific Islands) and for this study specifically at Palau Community College. Findings from this study reveal experiences of separation from Palauan Knowledge and the actions some collaborators took to preserve Palauan Knowledge. Collaborators' narratives highlight several instances where Palauan knowledge is honored within the college through visual and oral representations as well as with academic and community programming. Ultimately, this study demonstrates the resilient, dynamic and adaptive nature of Palauan Knowledge as well as the need to further make space and uncover the many footprint stories of Indigenous Knowledge in higher education. (QL)

1:30 to 2:45 pm

## **Breakout Room 2: Understanding Student Experiences**

*Moderator: Brandon Smith*

### **Living as an Advocate: A Qualitative Study on Peer Sexual Violence Advocates**

**Dr. Tom L. Fritz (HALE Alum)**

This qualitative dissertation explores the lived experience of students serving as confidential advocates for survivors of sexual violence. Using methods grounded in phenomenology, this study utilized student narratives to describe an advocate working with a survivor as it was experienced. The dissertation described the lived experience of advocates as embodied, liminal and survivor focused. *(QL)*

### **Student Connections to LGBTQ+ Centers**

**Chelsea Noble (HALE Doctoral Candidate)**

LGBTQ+ campus resource centers aim to promote the thriving of students holding marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities, yet little is known about students' experiences with these centers. The purpose of my dissertation study is to explore students' experiences and understandings of being connected to their campus LGBTQ+ resource center. Utilizing a qualitative methodology and a critical campus ecological framework, I considered the experiences of 14 students on one campus who felt connected to their campus LGBTQ+ center. Emerging findings suggest students' connections to their campus LGBTQ+ center developed as they find community and affirmation of their gender identities and sexual orientations, especially when they experienced hostile environments elsewhere on campus. *(QL)*

### **Adopting Identity-Conscious Student Success Strategies:**

#### **A Comparative Case Study of One Institution Addressing Opportunity Gaps**

**Scotty Secrist (HALE Doctoral Candidate)**

The purpose of this study was to better understand how an institution adopted identity-conscious student success strategies. Identity-conscious student success strategies have shown promising results in closing opportunity gaps. Through this study, I examined Michigan State University (MSU) and specifically the Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative (NSSC) unit because of their explicit utilization of identity-conscious student success strategies. Employing the vertical and transversal axes of Bartlett and Vavrus's (2017) comparative case study approach, I conducted qualitative interviews with nine participants and analyzed multiple documents, websites, and other media. Results showed MSU had to create an environment amenable to adopting identity-conscious student success strategies by changing the community's attitudes and approaches to student success work. Second, key actors skillfully navigated the institutional context with their deep understanding of the organizational structure, deploying their own credibility, and building and activating networks. Third, campus leaders galvanized organizational change through shifting the culture around data and supporting the work of empowerment agents. *(QL)*

1:30 to 2:45 pm

## **Breakout Room 3: Meaning-Making in Higher Education**

*Moderator: Aesha Mustafa*

### **At the Intersection of Multiple Identities: An Examination of How Black Women Community College Administrators Make Making of the Leadership Experience**

**Dr. Chastity D. Gaither (HALE Alum)**

Although the volume of literature on Black women in higher education is constantly growing, the experiences of Black women community college administrators have not been well documented in research literature. Using qualitative inquiry, this study examined and documented the leadership and meaning making experiences among 12 Black women who serve as community college administrators. The study was presented through a Black Feminist Thought lens that underscored the intersection of multiple marginalized identities in relation to perspectives on leadership and meaning making. *(QL)*

### **Stories from Filipinx Staff: Making Meaning of Decolonizing Higher Education**

**Dr. Annabelle L. Estera (HALE Alum)**

The purpose of this dissertation was to lift up the stories of Filipinx staff and their meaning-making, meanings, and enactments of decolonization. Through journaling, an online group meeting, and individual interviews with five staff in higher education in the United States, I aimed to answer the following research questions: How do Filipinx higher education staff make meaning of “decolonizing”? Overall, meaning-making, meanings, and enactments of decolonization in higher education for Filipinx staff, were shaped within encounters of conflicting orientations reflecting particular personal, institutional, and historical contexts. *(QL)*

### **Making Sense of Liberal Education in Nigeria: A Study of Faculty Perspectives**

**Bob Cermak (HALE Doctoral Candidate)**

Higher education researchers have highlighted the potentially homogenizing influences of globalization on the academic enterprise in non-Western regions, but educational transformations are far from uniform and curricular homogenization is invariably imbricated with local heterogenization and innovation. Therefore, my qualitative case study attempts to tease out and interrogate the push-and-pull between global, national, and local forces at play in one case of curricular change—namely the adoption, adaptation, and delivery of liberal education at a Nigerian university over time. Through semi-structured interviews with Nigerian liberal educators, I engaged in the critical project of generating knowledge in cooperation with local actors and change-makers. Findings include a series of interconnected yet oft competing forces that have influenced the curriculum along with an analysis of the varying meanings ascribed to these forces by local curricular actors in practice. *(QL)*