

Kay S. Varela, PhD  
Curriculum Vitae

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University of Southern California  
Dworak-Peck School of Social Work  
Montgomery Ross Fisher Building  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

kaysarai@usc.edu  
(616) 826-3598

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**EDUCATION**

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- 2020      **Ph.D., Sociology, Texas A&M University**  
Committee: Dr. Sarah N. Gatson (Co-Chair), Dr. Wendy Leo Moore (Co-Chair), Dr. Joseph O. Jewell, Dr. Phia S. Salter, Dr. John M. Eason (University of Wisconsin, Madison), and Dr. Anthony A. Peguero (Virginia Tech)  
Dissertation: “They’re the Worst Students!”: Constructions of Criminality, Racialized Safety, and Punishment in Texas Public Schools  
  
Qualifying Exams: 1) Race, Class, and Gender; 2) Crime, Law, and Deviance  
\*Passed: November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
\*Admitted to Ph.D. Candidacy: November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015
- 2013      **M.S., Sociology, Texas A&M University**  
Defended: December 2013 (awarded with distinction)  
Title: “I Never Thought it Would Happen Here”: White Privilege and Assumptions of Safety  
Committee: Dr. Sarah N. Gatson (Co-chair), Dr. Wendy Leo Moore (Co-chair), Dr. Phia S. Salter
- 2011      **B.A., Political Science, Calvin College** (now Calvin University)  
**B.A., Sociology, Calvin College** (now Calvin University)

***ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC TRAINING***

- 2017      Future Faculty Development Program  
Virginia Tech
- 2015      Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop  
Law and Society Association
- 2014      Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop (*declined*)  
Law and Society Association
- 2010      The Ralph Bunche Summer Institute  
Duke University (Sponsored by the American Political Science Association and the National Science Foundation)

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND RESEARCH AFFILIATIONS

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2020-Present	Postdoctoral Scholar – Research Associate School of Social Work University of Southern California
2020-Present	Research Assistant Professor Laboratory for the Study of Youth Inequality and Justice Virginia Tech
2019-Present	Researcher (Qualitative) American Institutes for Research
2018-2020	Graduate Research Associate Laboratory for the Study of Youth Inequality and Justice Virginia Tech
2018-2020	Research Assistant Public Policy Research Institute Texas A&M University
2018-2019	Lecturer Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies California State University, Long Beach
2014-2017	Graduate Research Assistant Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity (VPD) Texas A&M University
2012 -2014	Graduate Research Assistant Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies Texas A&M University
2012	Research Assistant Department of Sociology Texas A&M University
2012	Teaching Assistant Department of Women’s and Gender Studies Texas A&M University

## AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

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- Race and Ethnicity –Theories of Race and Ethnicity; Critical Race Theory; Latinx Sociology
- Gender - Chicana Feminism; Black Feminism; Intersectional Feminism; Critical Race Feminism
- Sociology of Law, Critical Criminology, Sociology of Punishment
- Qualitative Methods – Ethnography; Discourse Analysis; Feminist Methods

## PUBLICATIONS

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### **REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

- 2020      Kay S. Varela, Sanna King, Anthony A. Peguero , and Alicia Pantoja, “School Discipline, Justice, and Dropping Out: Examining the Significance of Gender, Race, and Ethnicity.” *Sociological Spectrum*. DOI: 10.1080/02732173.2020.1763878

- 2019 Stanley, Christine A., Karan L. Watson, Jennifer M. Reyes, and Kay S. Varela. “Organizational Change and the Chief Diversity Officer. A Case Study of Institutionalizing a Diversity Plan.” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 12(3): 255–265.
- 2018 Peguero, Anthony A., Miner P. “Trey” Marchbanks III, Kay S. Varela, John M. Eason, and Jamilia Blake. “Too Strict or Too Lenient?: Examining the Role of School Strictness with Educational and Juvenile Justice Outcomes.” *Sociological Spectrum* 38(4): 223–242
- 2018 Peguero, Anthony A., Kay S. Varela, Miner P. “Trey” Marchbanks III, Jamilia Blake, and John M. Eason. “School Punishment and Education: Racial/Ethnic Disparities with Grade Retention and the Role of Urbanicity.” *Urban Education*. DOI: 10.1177/0042085918801433
- 2018 Marchbanks III, Miner P. “Trey”, Anthony A. Peguero, Kay S. Varela, Jamilia Blake, and John M. Eason. “School Strictness and Disproportionate Minority Contact: Investigating Racial and Ethnic Disparities with the “School-to-Prison Pipeline.” *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 16(2): 241-259.
- 2017 Varela, Kay S., Anthony A. Peguero, John M. Eason, Miner P. “Trey” Marchbanks III, and Jamilia J. Blake. “School Strictness and Education: Investigating Racial and Ethnic Educational Inequalities Associated with being Pushed Out.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. DOI:10.1177/2332649217730086

#### **REFEREED BOOK CHAPTERS**

- 2014 Varela, Kay S. and Wendy Leo Moore. “‘He Looks Like He’s Up to No Good’: White Space, Constructions of Safety, and the Killing of Trayvon Martin.” Pp. 39-44 in *Trayvon Martin, Race, and “American Justice:” Writing Wrong*, edited by K. Fasching-Varner, A. Dixson, R. Reynolds, and K Albert. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

#### **MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION OR UNDER REVIEW**

Katherine Irwin, Anthony A. Peguero, and Kay S. Varela. “Schools-to-Jails and the Criminalization of Poor, Students of Color in the U.S.: Racial Threat Theories vs. Racialized Control Explanations” — article for submission.

Beatriz A. Marquez, John M. Eason, Kay S. Varela, David Hernandez, and T. Amorette Young. “Permanent Injury Beyond Medical Intervention: Disguising Death in U.S. Immigrant Detention” — manuscript under review.

Eason, John M., Richard Abel, and Kay Varela. “Racialized Pathways of Punishment to Maternal Separation During Childhood” — article for submission.

#### **CONFERENCE AND INVITED PRESENTATIONS**

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- 2019 Kay S. Varela. Paper session Presentation: “Toward a Revised Theory of Safety and Fear: School Punishment and Zero-Tolerance.” American Sociological Association (New York City, NY, August 2019).
- 2019 Kay S. Varela. Invited Presentation. “School-to-prison Pipeline and School Violence.” Florida Gang Investigators Association 2019 Summit on Youth Violence. (St. Augustine, Florida; June 2019) (declined – unable to attend).
- 2018 Anthony A. Peguero, Patricia Campie, Manolya Tanyu, Nicholas Read, Stephanie Quiles-Ramos, Kay S. Varela, and Lisa Yost. Invited Presentation. “Youth Violence and

- Inequality: The Conceptual Challenges with Community and School Disadvantage.” Office of Justice Programs (OJP) (Washington, DC.).
- 2017 Betty Aldana-Marquez, T. Amorette Young, Kay S. Varela, and John M. Eason. Paper session Presentation: “Permanent Injury Beyond Medical Intervention: Disguising Death in U.S. Immigrant Detention.” American Sociological Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, August 2017).
- 2017 Betty Aldana-Marquez, T. Amorette Young, Kay S. Varela, and John M. Eason. Paper session Presentation: “Permanent Injury Beyond Medical Intervention: Disguising Death in U.S. Immigrant Detention.” Law and Society Association (Mexico City, Mexico, June 2017).
- 2017 Jennifer M. Reyes and Kay S. Varela. Workshop presentation: “From Plan to Practice: Engaging Leadership in the University's Diversity Plan.” National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (Dallas, TX, May 2017).
- 2017 Kay S. Varela, Poster session (Invited): “But Those Students Need Discipline!.” Constructions of Criminality, Racialized Safety, and Punishment in Texas Public Schools.” American Educational Research Association (San Antonio, TX, April 2017).
- 2016 Kay S. Varela. Paper session presentation: “But Those Students Need Discipline!.” Constructions of Criminality, Racialized Safety, and Punishment in Texas Public Schools.” American Sociological Association (Seattle, WA, August 2016).
- 2016 Anthony A. Peguero, Sanna King, Kay S. Varela, and Alicia Pantoja. Paper session presentation: “School Discipline, Justice, and Dropping out: Examining the Significance of Gender, Race, and Ethnicity.” International Sociology Association—accepted; not presented (Vienna, Austria, July 2016).
- 2016 Anthony A. Peguero, Sanna King, Kay S. Varela, and Alicia Pantoja. Paper session presentation: “School Discipline, Justice, and Dropping out: Examining the Significance of Gender, Race, and Ethnicity.” Law and Society Association (New Orleans, LA, May 2016).
- 2016 Anthony A. Peguero, Sanna King, Kay S. Varela, and Alicia Rujosa. Invited Presentation. “The School-to-Prison Pipeline.” The Division of Politics, Administration & Justice & The Center for Public Policy, Colloquium Series, California State University, Fullerton. (Fullerton, CA, March 2016).
- 2016 Kay S. Varela. “They’re the Worst Students”: Constructions of Criminality, Racialized Safety, and Punishment in Texas Public Schools. Southwestern Social Science Association—accepted; not presented. (Las Vegas, NV, March 2016).
- 2016 Frank J. Ortega, Kay Varela, and Oscar Morales. Workshop: “The Socialization of Professionalism: Latinas/os Conforming, Reproducing, and Resisting Multiple forms of Oppression in Higher Education and Beyond.” Student Conference on Latino Affairs. (College Station, TX, March 2016).
- 2016 Kay S. Varela, Tiffany González, Catalina Camacho, Susana Hernández, Amanda Flores, and Sonia Hernández. Presentation: “Latinas in Academia: Combating Structures of Racism in the Ivory Tower and Creating Strategies to Survive and Thrive.” National Association of Chicano/Chicana Studies—Tejas Foco. (Houston, TX, February 2016).
- 2015 Invited Discussant. “Zoot Suit.” Latino/a and Mexican American Studies Minor. (November 2015).
- 2015 Kay S. Varela. “They’re the Worst Students”: Constructions of Criminality, Racialized Safety, and Punishment in Texas Public Schools. Society for the Study of Social Problems (Chicago, IL, August 2015).
- 2015 Kay S. Varela. “Zero-Tolerance”: Racialized Safety and Punishment in Texas Public Schools. Law and Society Association—accepted; not presented. (Seattle, WA, May 2015).

- 2015 Dr. Christine A. Stanley, Dr. Jennifer Reyes, and Kay S. Varela. Poster Presentation: “Assessing the Influence of Difficult Dialogues, Mediation, and Conflict Management Training in Enhancing Campus Climate. Texas A&M University Climate Matters Conference. (College Station, TX, March 2015).
- 2014 Kay S. Varela. “I Never Thought it Would Happen Here”: White Privilege and Assumptions of Safety. American Sociological Association. (San Francisco, CA, August 2014).
- 2014 Invited Panelist. “Graduate School 101.” Research Experience for Undergraduates (College Station, TX, June 2014).
- 2014 Kay S. Varela. “I Never Thought it Would Happen Here”: White Privilege and Assumptions of Safety. Law and Society Association. (Minneapolis, MN, May 2014).
- 2014 Kay S. Varela. “Racialized Representations of “Mother:” Welfare’s Construction of the Perfect (White) Mother. Southwestern Social Science Association. (San Antonio, TX, March 2014).
- 2013 Invited Panelist. “Welcome to Graduate School.” New Graduate Student Orientation – Texas A&M University Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. (College Station, TX, August 2013).
- 2013 Invited Panelist. “Everything You Wanted to Know about Graduate School.” Student Conference on Latino Affairs. (College Station, TX, March 2013).

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

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- 2018-Present Researcher (Qualitative Data Lead), Research on Lowering Violence in Communities and Schools (ReSOLV)  
 American Institutes for Research and Virginia Tech  
 PIs: Dr. Patricia Campie and Dr. Anthony A. Peguero  
 Description: Research on Lowering Violence in Communities in Schools (ReSOLV) is a California-wide study carried about by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) that examines: 1) The root causes of school violence; 2) The relationships between school safety (physical, social, and emotional), community safety, and student outcomes in rural, urban, and suburban schools in California; and 3) The capacities and commitment of staff, parents, students, schools, and your larger community and how they influence school safety and student outcomes. Findings will help schools and communities better understand the relationship between community, school, and individual capacities and the willingness to adopt a comprehensive school safety approach to address root causes of school violence. Results will inform schools’ planning, financing, and evaluation of current and future school safety prevention and intervention efforts.
- 2017-Present Research Team Member, Health, Violence, and Immigrant Detention  
 University of Wisconsin, Madison and Texas A&M University  
 PI: Dr. John M. Eason  
 Description: We seek to understand how race and punishment intersect to provide health disparities in immigrant detention centers, using novel data from the National Immigrant Justice Center. We ask: 1) Given the non-criminal nature of detainee violation, what is life like for the average immigrant detainee in the U.S.?; 2) What are the key characteristics in ICE facilities creating these conditions?; 3) What can immigrant detention centers teach us about health and racial stratification? Our current findings suggest that punitive capacity (sexual assaults, physical assaults, dispersion of chemical weapons, disturbances, use of restraints, and SWAT deployment) predict deaths, attempted suicides, and medical/psychiatric service referrals outside of the facility. We

- also find that punitive capacity is unrelated to facility standards, access to legal counsel, and detainee grievances.
- 2016-Present Research Team Member, Texas School Discipline Working Group  
Texas A&M University and Virginia Tech  
PIs: Dr. Anthony A. Peguero, Dr. Miner P. “Trey” Marchbanks III, Dr. Jamilia Blake, and Dr. John M. Eason  
Description: We investigate the multifaceted effects of school discipline policies on students and the causes of student educational disengagement in Texas using confidential data from the State of Texas supplied by the Texas Education Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin.
- 2013-2017 Research Team Member, Urban Re-Renewal  
Texas A&M University – Department of Sociology  
PI: Dr. Sarah N. Gatson  
Description: Our focus is to engage Texas A&M’s land grant mission legacy through participatory action research investigating community food security and access to healthy food as a citizenship right. Our team works with a variety of local community organizations, such as the Brazos Valley Boys and Girls Club, in an attempt to implement “Yard Farms” rather than community gardens throughout Brazos County, particularly within those areas where food security is becoming an increasing problem.
- 2013-2017 Research Team Member, BISSD OCR Investigation Research Team  
Texas A&M University – Department of Sociology & Department of Psychology  
PIs: Dr. Wendy Leo Moore and Dr. Phia Salter  
Description: The NAACP-Legal Defense & Educational Fund, in conjunction with the National Center for Youth Law and Texas Appleseed, filed a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights against the Bryan Independent School District. The complaint suggests that the Bryan ISD’s practice of assessing misdemeanor (criminal) tickets to students, particularly ticketing for minor behaviors like disorderly conduct, language infractions, and classroom disruption, has a disparate impact on African American students in the Bryan ISD and violates Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Our research team is providing qualitative social scientific research that provides a more nuanced assessment of the ways in which school based policing policies within the Bryan ISD have a disparate impact on African American students and further contribute to social stereotypes of criminality among men of color and the unequal distribution of personal safety among students within public schools.

## **RESEARCH SKILLS**

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- Fluent in English and Spanish
- Ethnographic methods
  - Participant observation
  - Intensive interviewing
- Community mapping
- Discourse analysis
- Qualitative data analysis using ATLAS.ti
- Legal analysis using ATLAS.ti
  - Cases
  - Statutes
  - Audits
  - Court documents

- Institutional assessment
  - University-wide and unit-level diversity initiatives (retention, recruitment, climate, and equity efforts)
  - Undergraduate educational experiences (high impact educational practices; service learning; internship programs)

## TEACHING

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### ***CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH***

- 2019      Lecturer (Instructor of Record)  
             Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
             WGSS 307(2) – Women and the Economy: Money, Sex, Power (Spring 2019)
- 2018      Lecturer (Instructor of Record)  
             Department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
             WGSS 307(2) – Women and the Economy: Money, Sex, Power (Fall 2018)

### ***TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY***

- 2016      Guest Lecturer  
             Department of Sociology  
             *Racial and Ethnic Relations*  
             Faculty: Wendy Leo Moore  
             Lecture Topic: Race, Space, Education, and Safety
- 2016      Guest Lecturer  
             Department of Sociology  
             *Critical Race Theory*  
             Faculty: Wendy Leo Moore  
             Lecture Topic: Topics in Critical Race Theory: Immigration
- 2016      Guest Lecturer  
             Department of Sociology  
             *Critical Race Theory*  
             Faculty: Wendy Leo Moore  
             Lecture Topic: Color-blindness and the Failure of Civil Rights Law
- 2014      Guest Lecturer  
             Department of Sociology  
             *Racial and Ethnic Relations*  
             Faculty: Wendy Leo Moore  
             Lecture Topic: Racialized Constructions of Safety and Criminality
- 2012      Guest Lecturer  
             Department of Women’s and Gender Studies  
             *Introduction to Women’s & Gender Studies*  
             Faculty: Dr. Kathi Miner  
             Lecture Topics (3 separate lectures): Five Themes in Women’s Health; Reproductive Choice and Fertility, Abortion, and Sterilization; State Law and Social Policy

### ***CALVIN COLLEGE***

- 2010      Guest Lecturer  
             *Introduction to International Relations*  
             Department of Political Science  
             Faculty: Dr. Joel H. Westra

**ACADEMIC AWARDS AND HONORS**

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2017	Dissertation Research Funding, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University
2017	Alternate, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
2016	Minority Dissertation Travel Award, American Educational Research Association (for American Educational Research Association 2017 Annual Meeting)
2016	Dissertation Research Funding, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University
2016	Travel Grant, Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity (Law and Society Association annual meeting)
2016	Travel Grant, Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity (NAACS Tejas Foco annual meeting)
2015	Professional Development Grant, College of Liberal Arts, Texas A&M University ( <i>declined</i> )
2015	George Bush Presidential Library Foundation Grant, Texas A&M University (Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop)
2015	Research Funding, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University (Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop)
2015	Travel Grant, Law and Society Association (Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop)
2014	Travel Grant, Law and Society Association (Law and Society Graduate Student Workshop - <i>declined</i> )
2014	Seed Grant, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund/National Center for Youth Law
2014	Travel Grant, NSF—SBE EDGE Fellowship (American Sociological Association annual meeting)
2014	Travel Grant, NSF—SBE EDGE Fellowship (Law and Society Association annual meeting)
2014	Travel Grant, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University (Southwestern Social Science Association annual meeting)
2014	Alternate, Ford Foundation Pre-doctoral Fellowship
2013	Travel Grant, NSF—SBE EDGE Fellowship (American Sociological Association annual meeting)
2012	Summer Graduate Research Assistantship, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University
2011-2012	National Science Foundation—Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Fellow, Texas A&M University
2009-2011	Calvin College Dean’s List
2010-2011	Johan and Wilma Westra Scholarship, Calvin College Department of Political Science
2010-2011	Academic Achievement Award, Calvin College
2007-2011	James F. Beré Memorial Scholarship, Calvin College
2007-2011	Calvin College Multicultural Award
2007-2011	Calvin College Entrada Scholarship



## SERVICE

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### ***TO THE PROFESSION***

- 2019            Presider/Session Moderator. "Policing Black and Brown Bodies."  
American Sociological Association (August 2019, New York, NY)
- 2017-Present   Occasional Reviewer
- *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*
  - *Educational Policy*
  - *Journal of School Violence*
  - *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*
  - *Sociology of Education*
  - *Social Problems*

### ***TO TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY***

- 2013-2015      College of Liberal Arts Diversity Committee, Texas A&M University
- Committee Member (nominated position)
- 2013-2014      Council on Climate and Diversity, Texas A&M University
- Committee Member (nominated position)
- \*\*Purpose: To provide counsel to the President and the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics on all ways of attracting and retaining culturally diverse students, faculty, and staff to Texas A&M University and to strengthen, sustain, and promote our diversity efforts in support of Vision 2020 goals. In addition, the Council will assist the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity in planning appropriate assessment and evaluation of all university units regarding diversity-related endeavors.
- 2013-present   Glasscock Latino/Latina Studies Working Group, Texas A&M University
- Member
- 2012-present   Hispanic/Latino Graduate Student Association, Texas A&M University
- Member (2014-present)
  - President (2013-2014)
- \*\*Notable activities: Providing counsel to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies and The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (as part of University accreditation) in the areas of retention of graduate students of color, strengthening diversity efforts, and policies aimed at improving the campus climate for graduate students of color, member of organizing committee for creating a Latino/Chicano Studies minor (implemented in Fall 2014).
- Treasurer (2012-2013)

### ***TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY***

- 2012-2016      Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network, Bryan, TX
- Intake Volunteer

### ***TO CALVIN COLLEGE***

- 2008-2011      Multicultural Affairs Committee, Calvin College
- Student Advisor
- 2008-2011      Multicultural Student Advisory Board, Calvin College
- Student Leader (2009-2011)
  - Member (2008-2009)

2009-2011 Faith and International Development Conference, Calvin College  
-Co-Director (2010-2011)  
-Committee Member (2009-2010)

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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American Educational Research Association  
-Division G - Social Context of Education  
American Society of Criminology  
-Division of Policing  
-Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice  
American Sociological Association  
-Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities  
-Section on Sociology of Law  
-Section on Latino/a Sociology  
-Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance  
-Section on Race, Class, and Gender  
California Faculty Association  
Latinx Criminology (LC) Network  
Law and Society Association  
-Collaborative Research Network 12: Critical Research on Race and Law  
Society for the Study of Social Problems  
-Division on Crime and Juvenile Delinquency  
-Division on Racial and Ethnic Minorities  
-Division on Law and Society

## REFERENCES

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Dr. Wendy Leo Moore  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University  
wlmoore@tamu.edu

Dr. Sarah N. Gatson  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University  
gatson@tamu.edu

Dr. John M. Eason  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
jeason2@wisc.edu

Dr. Anthony A. Peguero  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech  
anthony.peguero@vt.edu

Dr. Christine A. Stanley  
Professor, Higher Education, Texas A&M University  
cstanley@tamu.edu

Dr. Jennifer Reed  
Professor and Department Chair, Department of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, California State  
University, Long Beach  
jennifer.reed@csulb.edu