

MTSU Faculty and Students Present at the 2014 American Democracy Project Conference

August 8, 2016

Beginning in 2003, the American Democracy Project (ADP) is a multi-campus initiative whose goal is “to produce graduates who are committed to being knowledgeable, involved citizens in their communities.” The organization is made up of 250 colleges and universities that host initiatives such as “voter education and registration, curriculum revision projects, campus audits, special days of action and reflection (MLK Day of Service, Constitution Day), speaker series, and many recognition and award programs.”

The 2014 American Democracy Project and Democracy Commitment National Meeting took place June 5th-7th at the Marriott Louisville Downtown in Louisville, Kentucky. The conference focused on the theme “Forging Civic Pathways for Students Between Our Institutions” which discussed building “civic learning and engagement experiences” for students on ADC campuses in addition to those transferring between the initiative’s two and four year colleges and universities.

The Experiential Learning (EXL) Program at Middle Tennessee State University prepares students for future careers through hands-on experiences and opportunities in course curriculum. The American Democracy Project is a major component in EXL Civic Engagement and History courses, thus the EXL program sponsored travel of MTSU faculty and students for this year’s American Democracy Project Meeting. Among the speakers and presenters at the conference were Middle Tennessee State University Undergraduate Students Brendon Holloway, Hannah Owens, and Joshua Moore; Graduate Students Aleia Brown, Amanda Berry, and Ginna Foster Cannon; and MTSU’s Associate Professor of History Mary Evins, Associate Professor of Education Terry Goodin, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership Laura Clark, and Director of Experiential Learning Carol Swayze.

The following presentation descriptions for MTSU’s faculty and students were provided in the conference’s official program (<http://www.aascu.org/meetings/adptdc14/draftprogram/>):

- **(Stu) Roundtable Discussion: University Policies and Student Experiences Regarding Gender Identity and Sexuality**

The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to focus on issues of gender identity and sexuality as these relate to campus experiences. This roundtable allows students, faculty and administrators to discuss their experiences, current policies that exist on other campuses and contemplate future policy changes that may promote diversity.

Facilitators: **Michelle Dietert**, Associate Professor of Sociology, Texas A&M University Central Texas

Brendon Holloway, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Gender Identity and Attitudes on Campus: Creating Civic Pathways and Solving Problems**

Although sexuality is being addressed nationwide, gender identity is often still being sidestepped. By surveying students and conducting faculty interviews, the presenter’s research focuses on the experiences of students and faculty at Middle Tennessee State University

regarding gender identity, and how we can create pathways guiding us toward acceptance as a university through ADP.

Brendon T. Holloway, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Civic Engagement among Engaged Students**

This study provides a base understanding of student civic engagement for those seeking out VADP (civic engagement activities) and those who participate in university events and activities without a civic engagement focus. Qualitative and quantitative responses to ADP event/activity surveys and an ADP public art project are discussed.

Presenters: **Michelle Dietert**, Associate Professor of Sociology, Texas A&M University - Central Texas

Brendon Holloway, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Citizenship and Enforcement: Is Citizenship That's Coerced as Valuable as Voluntary? MTSU's Tobacco-Free Policy**

In 2012, Middle Tennessee State University began a campus-wide tobacco-free policy. Initial thoughts were that the policy would be freely complied with. Instead, noncompliance and cynicism abound. If voluntary participation is not working, direct enforcement may provide a different, more compliant outcome. ADP asks, is some sort of enforcement necessary for positive citizenship?

Hannah Owens, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **A Step in the Right Direction: Organizing the Community Forum**

National Issues Forums held across the country last year created opportunities for citizens to discuss community issues vis-a-vis higher education and renewed town-gown dialogues, setting the stage for universities' own campus discussions, using the tag, "We all got issues. What's yours?"

Joshua Moore, Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Reflecting on the Past, Moving Forward: New Prospect's Legacy with the Jewish Community**

New Prospect Baptist Church is moving into the Old Jewish Community Center. This transition follows the pattern of predominately black churches moving into Jewish spaces in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is also an opportunity to sustain the Black-Jewish legacy that peaked during the civil rights movement.

Presenter: **Aleia Brown**, Graduate Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Recovering Rural Community Heritage: Preserving One Room School Houses as Public Work**

With fellow students at the Center for Historic Preservation, the presenter has been working with local communities in Tennessee to preserve the physical buildings and histories of one room school houses. By preserving these schools, we help to maintain communities' cultural history and shared heritage.

Presenter: **Amanda Barry**, Graduate Student, Middle Tennessee State University

- **Community Partnerships: Transforming Luxury Historic Hotels into Vehicles of Civic Engagement**

Community partnerships between historic preservationists, public historians and luxury historic hotels have the potential to transform hotels into vehicles of civic engagement. These partnerships help explore how these historic sites were more than just pleasure palaces; they were also conflicted spaces in terms of gender, class and race.

Presenter: **GINNA FOSTER CANNON**, Graduate Student, Middle Tennessee State University
- **(Pol) Pre-conference Session: Election 2014 and Beyond—An i3 (Information, Ideas, and Innovation) Conversation** (open to all)

Join ADP and TDC for a conversation designed to exchange information, ideas and innovations about advancing student electoral and political engagement in this year’s mid-term election cycle and beyond.

Facilitators: **MARY EVINS**, Associate Professor, Center for Historic Presentation and Department of History; ADP Campus Coordinator, Middle Tennessee State University
ALBERTO OLIVAS, Director, Center for Civic Participation, Maricopa Community Colleges (Ariz.)
- **Attitudes, Actions, and Asking Questions: Assessing MTSU's Civic Health Baseline**

MTSU’s campus civic health survey is providing a platform for new discussions that are opening doors to a series of new relationships with community colleges across the state and with civic and educational organizations in the community toward shared objectives for increased civic health awareness and stronger institutional interconnections.

Presenter: **MARY EVINS**, Associate Professor, Center for Historic Presentation and Department of History; ADP Campus Coordinator, Middle Tennessee State University
- **Where Learning Meets Doing: Using Problem-Based Learning to Connect Universities, Community Colleges and the Communities They Serve**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional strategy that organizes learning around a central problem, creating a link between community colleges and universities seeking to address specific, local issues. Shared problems unite schools and communities in common activities. This presentation discusses the role of PBL in creating a common learning community.

Presenter: **TERRY GOODIN**, Associate Professor of Education, Middle Tennessee State University
- **Pre-Service Teachers and Policy Pathways: Discovering the Connection between Education Policymaking and K-12 Classrooms**

Education policy has been de-emphasized in recent re-designs of teacher education curriculum, and this presentation will describe how teacher education faculty members can provide authentic experiences for preservice teachers to observe and experience education policymaking. Results of a project at Middle Tennessee State University, College of Education, are presented.

Presenter: **LAURA CLARK**, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, Middle Tennessee State University

- **EXL Scholars Program at MTSU: Enhancing Student Engagement and Success through Service Learning**

Participants learn how Middle Tennessee State University has infused service learning into academic courses to create a national model that is both sustainable and replicable. Explore how the program has been institutionalized and how students earn the honor of the EXL Scholar Designation upon graduation.

Presenter: **Carol Swayze**, Director, Experiential Learning, Middle Tennessee State University