

CAMPUS NEWS

School of Education and Sociology Professors Receive Research Grants from St. Thomas University – Diverse Research on Self-Help Books and Teaching Science

PUBLISHED DATE: Monday, December 16, 2013



Dr. Grant Williams has received a research grant, valued at \$4,500, from the St. Thomas University Senate Research Committee.

St. Thomas University professors Dr. Erin Fredericks and Dr. Grant Williams have received research grants, valued at \$4,500 each, from the Senate Research Committee.

“Avant-garde, cutting edge, and sorely needed describes these grants—our faculty are doing highly interesting research across the disciplines,” said Dr. Gayle MacDonald, Assistant Vice-President, Research.

Fredericks, who teaches in the Sociology Department, will be using the grant to analyze the remedies and exclusions in mainstream and LGBTQ self-help books that promote happiness. Her study, titled “Reading Ourselves Well: A Critical Analysis of Self-Help Approaches to Happiness,” will compare heterosexual and LGBTQ self-help books to illuminate some of the ways the empowering aspects of the texts can be better realized.

Fredericks was drawn to this area of study through her previous research on women’s experiences with breast cancer.

“In studying breast cancer, I noticed that being positive was both helpful and very difficult for women with the disease,” she said. “Similarly, I think guidance about how we should be happy is both enabling and constraining.”

With the help of this grant, Fredericks and two students will analyze 20 self-help books to contrast books written for a mainstream audience with those written for the LGBTQ community.

“I am grateful for this support and I look forward to completing the research,” she said.

Williams, who teaches in the School of Education, will explore approaches in the development and testing of the effects of a collection of movement-based learning activities on K-12 students’ understanding of abstract science concepts.

His study, “Kinulations: Fostering K-12 Students’ Understanding of Science Concepts Through Active Participation in Kinesthetic Simulations,” will analyze the impact of this technique on student learning. He will also investigate and develop descriptions of the interactions between teachers and students in order to determine the best practices to support this form of instruction.

MacDonald said that to have a new and a relatively new faculty member win the university’s largest internal awards is a marker of the quality of researchers at the university.

“As judged by their peers, Dr. Fredericks, a St. Thomas alumnus, is conducting research in a long-neglected area of the emergent ‘self-help’ industry by focusing on texts specifically for the LGBTQ community and Dr. Williams has long been investigating the processes behind learning in education and in this project he is moving to a paradigm that combines kinesthetics with a new learning model.”

- Dr. Rusty Bittermann (History) - "London Merchants and Early 19th Century Prince Edward Island: Contextualizing the Gosling Family's Colonial Investments"
 - Dr. Jamie Gillies (Journalism and Communications)- "The Politics of Sound: Counterhegemonic Globalization and the Decline of the Record Industry"
 - Dr. Bonnie Huskins (History) - "World historical processes in William Booth's world: using social biography to study war, slavery, trade and social support networks in the 18th century"
 - Dr. Aamir Jamal (School of Social Work) - "Canadian Muslim youth, global radicalization and violent extremism"
 - Prof. Dawn Sadoway (Fine Arts) - "The Language of the Teaching Voice - A Qualitative Study Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching Voice"
 - Prof. Josephine Savarese (Criminology)- "Exploring R v Ipeelee Through the Lens of Hawaiian Epistemology: Research Development in a Field Setting"
 - Dr. Monika Stelzl (Psychology) - "Returning "home": Exploring New Brunswickers' Accounts of Return Migration"
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