Dear Friends:

_The Act of Inquiry_ is a compilation of books, book chapters, book reviews and peer-reviewed manuscripts authored by the faculty at The University of Tampa’s College of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Education and published in 2013-2014. While many of our students recognize our faculty as excellent teachers and mentors, it is often overlooked that they are very accomplished scholars as well. And while I would be the first to agree that outstanding teaching and learning is the hallmark of any great liberal arts university, we also need to recognize that teaching at the cutting-edge of one’s discipline is inextricably tied to an active engagement in scholarship, inquiry and discovery. Accordingly, this publication is designed to recognize and celebrate our collective engagement in the act of inquiry.

As you examine their scholarship, I hope you will recognize the breadth of their inquiry and their efforts:

- To better understand the social and psychological impact of violence against women;
- To examine the intersection of Internet policy and constitutional privacy;
- To assess the impact of animated pedagogical agents on student learning;
- To test the judicial assumptions of the “consensual encounter;”
- To enhance the application of statistical modeling on cancer mortality rates;
- To document the changing societal dynamics regarding sexual preference;
- To examine the utilization and efficacy of videoconferencing for the delivery of clinical mental health services;
- And to explore the societal dynamics and impact of the non-religious.

This is just a sampling of the research that our faculty members have been engaged in. But to truly understand the act of inquiry, we have also highlighted some of our faculty members so you might be able to better understand the motivation that drives their work. Why do they spend their summers sifting through the archives, analyzing data, interviewing the homeless, conducting experiments and writing, writing and writing? The act of inquiry is truly an act of passion. For many it is similar to the act of trying to satisfy an insatiable curiosity, solve an extraordinarily vexing puzzle or scratch that unrelenting itch.

It has often been noted that the reason why mountain climbers risk their lives to scale the highest peaks over and over again is simply because the mountain is there. Well there you go . . .

Jack M. Geller, Ph.D.
Dean
College of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Education
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Associate Professor Kathryn Branch completed her doctorate at the University of South Florida in 2005 and accepted a faculty position at UT in 2006. Her current research focuses on the secondary impact of sexual assault and dating violence on University faculty. Previous research has demonstrated that some college students utilize their professors as support providers when they experience sexual assault and intimate partner violence victimization and that students often do not want to tell their family or formal agencies. However, few professors receive any training on resources available to students, crisis intervention, sexual assault advocacy, and/or the victim recovery process; and those that do likely do so both independently and unofficially. As a result, professors can be left unprepared for a student’s disclosure, which may have a profound effect on both the survivor and the professor. Branch explains, “The main goals of this research are to (1) provide best practices for developing protocols for campus response to gendered violence and (2) provide important information for faculty trainings.


After completing his master’s degree at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, Associate Professor Sean Maddan traveled north to the University of Nebraska at Omaha to work on his doctorate. Prior to his recruitment to UT in 2006 Maddan served as a visiting Professor at Texas Christian University. Maddan’s scholarship is somewhat eclectic and involves the links between social learning and the use of firearms by the worst criminal offenders; an examination of the focal concerns theory for federal court sentencing outcomes; and a focus on the links between the economy, Marxian theories and crime at a macro level using many econometric indicators. While he sometimes views this diversity of scholarship as a weakness, Maddan admits, “It is also one of the things I love most about the job. If I get tired of research in one area, I can always go find an escape in another area of inquiry.”


completed her doctorate in measurement and research at the University of South Florida. She notes that “...most of my research is about validating amorphous topics relevant to education. Such topics include university collegiality and student engagement.” In fact Johnston does quite a bit of research with students and has published manuscripts with them as well. Not surprisingly Johnston enthusiastically states, “I love working with the students. I co-sponsor a leadership group in our department and these students are especially rewarding to work with because they are so young and thirsty to be excellent teachers.”


Associate Professor Patty O’Grady brought more than 20 years of educational experience with her when she arrived at UT after multiple assignments at institutions throughout Maryland and Florida. Her emphasis on applied psychology in education has resulted in many national and state consultancies, successful federal and state grant projects, national, state, and local training, and publications. “Grounded in classic psychological theory, and merging with neuroscience research, my scholarship is concerned with the affective correlates of learning,” explains O’Grady. “Since I began my studies, I engaged in applied research related to mental health in schools. This work led to a natural progression toward the evolving science of positive psychology that is my exclusive research focus now. My book, Positive Psychology in the Elementary School Classroom, is currently in Chinese translation and has brought me the opportunity to speak and work with teachers internationally.” O’Grady is currently working on the companion book, Positive Psychology in the Secondary Classroom, for future publication.


Assistant Professor Liv Coleman received her doctorate in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and spent a year as an advanced research fellow with the Harvard Program on U.S.-Japan Relations before accepting a position at UT. Coleman is interested in political questions that deeply implicate or touch people’s everyday lives. As a result she has two streams of research. She is interested in Japanese gender politics and family policy responses to Japan’s declining birthrate. “I find that Japanese policymakers see making strides toward gender equality as the central challenge of modernization, as well as the key to boosting the birthrate. This policy process, however, involves significant contestation over what constitutes a “good” or “normal” family, and I explore these competing conceptions,” she notes. Coleman is also interested in the study of international organization, particularly global Internet governance.

Mary Anderson, Ph.D.

After earning her doctorate in 2005 from Florida State University, Associate Professor Mary Anderson headed west to the University of Memphis to begin her academic career. But it didn’t take long before she found herself missing the familiar surroundings of the Sunshine State. She began her appointment here at the University of Tampa in 2008 and hasn’t looked back. Dr. Anderson specializes in research on public opinion, political psychology and political behavior. Her research has appeared in the American Political Science Review, Journal of Politics, Political Psychology and Political Behavior. More recently she has been extending her work on political behavior to the international context (specifically Ghana), evaluating the extent to which the variables we have come to identify as significant to political participation are similar to or different than those in Ghana. This comparative research she has been conducting in concert with her department colleague Dr. Kevin Fridy.


You can certainly make the case that Associate Professor Scott Paine practices what he preaches. He began working on political campaigns in his sophomore year of college and continued in a variety of capacities for more than two decades. After serving in academic positions at the State University of New York at Albany and the University of South Florida, Paine became a candidate himself, winning two consecutive terms on Tampa’s City Council (1991-1999). In 1993, he joined the faculty here at UT. When asked about his scholarship, Paine notes, “I am interested in the characteristics of elected officials and the strategic decisions they make that allow communities to deal with challenging situations. One key component of this is the elected officials’ sense of ethics and public duty. I also am interested in the degree to which an elected official’s approach to service must be different from their private ways of doing business.” Paine regularly consults with local governments and municipal leagues, taking great satisfaction from reports that public servants in Florida and elsewhere in the country have greater success in public service through the use of some of his recommended strategies and tactics.


For much of the 1990s, Associate Professor Spencer Segalla oscillated between graduate studies at Stony Brook University and teaching at the Casablanca American School in Morocco. After completing his doctorate in 2003 he taught at Nassau Community College while drafting his first book *The Moroccan Soul*, which was published in 2009. He joined the University of Tampa history department in 2010. His current research examines natural and man-made disasters in the 1950s and 1960s in order to further our understanding of the changes that took place during the process of decolonization in the French empire, when France’s African and Asian subjects gained political independence. When asked what he finds most satisfying at UT, Segalla notes, “Without a doubt it is my interactions with students, especially when I am able to connect with their intellectual curiosity and open their eyes to new areas of interest.”


Professor Albert Tillson

notes that like many historians, he went through a couple of temporary positions before finding a permanent home at UT. These include stops at St. Norbert College and the University of Texas-Pan American. Tillson notes, “From the beginning of my scholarly career I have been very much interested in the role of class conflict in American life and in the effort to recapture the dignity and complexity of the lives of non-elite groups. In part because I was born and grew up in Virginia my current interests as well as my two earlier books have centered on that state, though focusing on very different parts of it.” Tillson is presently working on a study of enslaved and free maritime workers in the revolutionary and antebellum Chesapeake. He explains that this project “critiques the prevailing image of maritime workers in the Chesapeake and the eighteenth-century Atlantic world as challenging the authority and values of their “betters,” particularly the established forms of racial and economic inequality and suggests a more nuanced picture of maritime workers relations with the structures of power in the world around them.”

Professor Terry Parssinen

served as dean of UT’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences from 1992–1995. Like others, he previously served in positions at Grinnell College, Temple University and the University of Maryland before making the University of Tampa his permanent home. Looking back on his career Parssinen notes, “Since I received my doctorate from Brandeis University, I have published three books and 16 articles, all in refereed journals in history. However since 2003, I have worked in “applied history,” doing research on the history of smoking in the U.S., and testifying as an expert witness in civil litigations.”
After receiving her doctorate from Baylor University in 2009, Assistant Professor Leslie Jones accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona before arriving at The University of Tampa in 2011. At Arizona Jones had two postdoctoral mentors: Timothy Secomb, a professor of both physiology and mathematics, and Ardith El-Kareh, a research professor with a doctorate in chemical engineering. Together they worked to develop mathematical models of chemotherapy drug interactions and transport. Today Jones is continuing that framework as she seeks to develop mathematical models to describe fish populations and their ecological interactions. Specifically, she is interested in studying fish populations of the Tampa Bay Estuary, and addressing questions with implications for sustainability. Explaining her focus Jones notes, “I hope this research will contribute to the greater body of knowledge that guides regulators and conservationists in their efforts to preserve and improve our natural resources.”


Eric Odgaard, Ph.D.

**Associate Professor Eric Odgaard** earned his doctorate at the University of Nebraska and then completed a competitive four-year NIH postdoctoral grant at Yale University. He came to Florida serving in a faculty position at nearby University of South Florida St. Petersburg for five years, before accepting a position here at The University of Tampa. Odgaard studies the intersection of scientific efficiency and slop — where scientists try new, more “efficient” techniques and statistics, but in so doing may violate the steps of the scientific process. At the moment, that means: 1) (re)measuring the validity and reliability of a new and supposedly “concise” scale to measure personality traits; and, 2) studying the ways in which undergraduate research assistants cut corners when collecting data. Odgaard explains, “I was told at 12 that I am a Jesuit; what motivates me is the good practice of science as the most efficient system by which many different scientists in many different fields can explore the world around them in pursuit of understanding. There is a just-emerging push of research in my field into the ways scientists overstep themselves. My goal is to help lead this discussion.”

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Assistant Professor Jason Sumerau was recruited to UT directly from Florida State University after completing his master’s and doctoral degrees. Sumerau says unequivocally that the thing that satisfies him the most at UT is working with students that continuously inspire interesting questions and ideas. Yet at the same time, he is a prolific writer and researcher. Sumerau explains, “For as long as I can remember, I’ve always been fascinated by the many ways the world we live in is structured, influenced and in some ways created by the combinations of sexualities, religions, gender and health. I would thus say I have a desire to understand these complicated dynamics in the lives of people and the path of history as well as the possibility for creating better opportunities for people regardless of these interrelated meaning systems that drives me forward.”


Associate Professor Ryan Cragun came to UT directly from his graduate program at the University of Cincinnati. “I chose UT because it offers a good balance between teaching and research, with small class sizes so I can get to know my students pretty well. It’s also a beautiful campus in a beautiful city,” says Cragun. Regarding his research Cragun notes that his primary emphasis is on Mormonism and the nonreligious. He approaches both from the theoretical perspective that the world is growing more secular and therefore he is interested in how modernization and secularization influence Mormonism and in how people make the transition to being nonreligious. “The contrast between old and new is what fascinates me about religion. While there are certainly new religions, and new religions come into existence every year, the central idea behind religion — communication with the supernatural — is an ancient one. Much modern thinking rejects the idea that there are supernatural entities with whom humans can communicate, and an increasing number of people around the world are coming to this conclusion. It is the clash of old versus new ways of thinking that interests me,” explains Cragun.


After graduating from the University of Calgary and a decade of teaching at Kent State University, **Associate Professor Bruce Friesen** accepted a position here at UT. When asked to describe his research, Friesen calls it applied sociology, with a heavy emphasis on human rights. “I’m fascinated with the articulation of human rights in the wake of the Holocaust, in the form of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” Friesen explains. “The fact that a diversity of voices representing different cultural and religious traditions could agree on what is basically a values statement is impressive. All social entities develop values as a means to integrate and organize. At this point in global human evolution, respect for human rights principles seems to offer the best hope for decreasing violent conflict and creating a better global future.”


Sumerau, J. E., & Jirek, S.L. (forthcoming). Post-apocalyptic Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in Firefly. In *After the Apocalypse: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and the End of the World as We Know It.*


