

# HPSE HIGHER AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Teachers College, Columbia University

## NEWSLETTER

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### WELCOME!

As we embark on another academic year we are confronted with new and old questions in our society, many of them with direct impact on higher education. We are excited to welcome our new students and welcome back those that are returning. In our courses and in our co-curricular events we will be confronting the renewed questions of affirmative action and the changing public opinion on postsecondary education. We will continue to explore how Black Lives Matter in Higher Education and how the uptick in White supremacy, anti-Semitism, and other forms of hate impact our students and our campuses. There is a lot to delve into this year, and we are excited for all of you to join us for these topics and more.

Best,

Noah D. Drezner

Associate Professor, Higher Education

Program Director, Higher & Postsecondary Education



### EDUCATION IN ACTION: THE FOUNDING OF THE RURAL STUDENT GROUP AT TC

— By Ty McNamee

Rural students face barriers - including, but not limited to financial, cultural, academic, and spatial - to accessing and attending college. Currently, rural students hold the lowest college-going rates in the country, when compared to their urban counterparts (Adelman, 2002). Even when rural individuals do attend college, they do so more often at less selective schools (Byun, Irvin, & Meece, 2012a) and experience hardship adjusting to rigorous academics and engaging socially with their peers (Ganns, 2016). It is the multitude of hardships facing rural students that encouraged current HPSE doctoral student Ty McNamee to found the Rural Student Group at Teachers College.

Last academic year, Ty took a course in the Human Development Department with Dr. Elizabeth Tipton, Assistant Professor of Applied Statistics at Teachers College. After a visit to Dr. Tipton during her office hours, Ty and Dr. Tipton quickly realized they both hailed from rural areas

of the country, Dr. Tipton from rural Kentucky and Ty from a small town in Wyoming. These conversations led them to share stories with one another that showcased their common experiences

attempting to navigate higher education and large cities so different from the hometowns in which they were raised.

It was not long before Dr. Tipton and Ty wondered if they were the only individuals from rural areas at Teachers College and Columbia experiencing this dissonance between their background and current setting. They began to meet more often, asking one another how they could support other students navigating Columbia and a large area like New York City, as well as how they could help the field of education to focus more on rural issues in K-12 and higher education. It was then that the idea for the Rural Student Group at Teachers College was born.

After creating and developing initial thoughts on what this group could encompass, another TC student, Cassandra (Cassie) Ziegler in the International and Transcultural Studies Department, struck up a conversation with Ty. Before long, they too realized their shared experiences, as Cassie was from rural Washington State. With another person on-board, Rural Student Group truly began to take shape.

After hard work over the past academic year, Rural Student Group has the potential to become a major support network for students,

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## CONGRATULATIONS!

**Maria Anderson-Long**

EdD Candidate Maria Anderson-Long has been awarded the Teachers College Vice President's Grant for Student Research in Diversity in order to aid her upcoming dissertation research.

**Ty McNamee & Jolie Woodson**

EdD student Ty McNamee and EdD Candidate Jolie Woodson have been awarded the Anna Neumann Supporting Student Research Award. The award is granted annually to one or more doctoral students as a research advancement fund. The fund supports doctoral researchers' studies of professors' work and careers, and/or college teaching and learning.

**Kat Mothudi**

EdM student Kat Mothudi was awarded the Teachers College Provost's Grant for Professional Development in order to travel to and present at the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) National Conference in San Antonio, TX.

## RESEARCH INTERESTS FUELED BY PERSONAL &amp; PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

— By Maria Anderson-Long

At our program's orientation in 2014, I sat in Zankel 212C as Professor Neumann drew three concentric circles on the board. She explained that the faculty in our program view their research as existing within, and overlapping along, these circles which represent different levels within higher education, from the classroom, to the university, and out to the larger society. Looking back at my time in HPSE, it is clear that this concept has influenced the way that I have conceptualized my current research.

Broadly, my dissertation explores how colleges and universities respond to the disruption of social norms, which I call normative disruption, through policy creation. In the last century we have seen several instances of normative disruption: the women's suffrage movement, the Chicana movement, the Civil Rights movement, the LGBT rights movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement. These movements interrupted existing norms in social culture which privilege majority identities (i.e., White, male, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied). Normative disruption - of White supremacy, heteronormativity, sexism - have led to changes such as the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Each of these resultant legislative changes has had far reaching implications for American society and its subsystems.

My study examines normative disruption of the gender binary, and the decision-making processes of subsequent policy creation within the subsystem of higher education. In order to examine this phenomenon, I employ an open systems theoretical framework. Open systems theory is useful for understanding how colleges and

universities are influenced by their external environment. The norm of the gender binary has been challenged in larger society, as we see in instances such as Time Magazine's March, 26, 2017 cover headline, "Beyond he or she: How a new generation is redefining the meaning of gender" (Steinmetz, 2017). Due to their permeable boundaries, the gender binary has also been disrupted within colleges and universities. I focus my research on the creation of Gender Inclusive Housing (GIH) policies as a possible response mechanism to the normative disruption of the gender binary.

As a Master's student at Ohio State, I wrote my thesis about language choices within GIH policies. After working for a few years, I found myself still driven by questions about GIH, which led me to apply to doctoral programs, and to TC. Since beginning my doctoral journey, my broad research interest has not changed. However, my coursework and conversations with my advisor, Professor Noah Drezner, and my peers have transformed my approach to studying GIH. The concentric circles Professor Neumann explained on my first day in HPSE have served as a backdrop to my understanding of how GIH policies might be a response to one instance of external societal influence. Through my dissertation research, I hope to better understand how, as institutions respond to normative disruption, we can utilize organizational theory to understand decision-making processes. This in turn, might further our knowledge, and practice, of creating policies that support marginalized students.



## LAUREN PERCY'S STORY: FINDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HPSE AND THE MISS AMERICA ORGANIZATION



I came to Teachers College for the "community of changemakers." In the HPSE program, the world seemed to shift for me as theories of social inequalities painted the field of higher education in a different light.

Suddenly everyone I met, including myself, became a player in someone's set of "Sociology Monopoly." To put it bluntly, you have to shuffle the cards in order to dodge a "go to jail" card. If you go with the flow, you're playing the game. If you're playing the game, you're part of the problem.

This epistemology shaped the manner in which I approached the Miss New Hampshire competition. I realized that this program could be my chance to shuffle the cards.

The Miss America Organization (MAO) provides young women with the funds and cultural capital to thrive educationally and professionally. Cultural capital places people in power. People in power cause paradigm shifts. Paradigm shifts have the power to deconstruct structural barriers... including objectification and subordination of the oppressed.

Additionally, every participant in the MAO has a personal platform - an issue that they use the notoriety of the title to address. Through working with my platform, "#ReachHigher: Making Higher Education Possible," I strive to make

*Story cont. pg. 4*



— By Ty McNamee

Welcome to our new and returning HPSE MA students! I am looking forward to serving as your advisor for the academic year! During my master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of Connecticut and my last two years in the HPSE doctoral program here at Teachers College, I gained some valuable pieces of advice that I am happy to pass on to you all:

(1) Become a scholar-practitioner. Some of you might like reading scholarship and conducting research more, whereas some of you might enjoy serving in administrative practitioner roles more. However, what I challenge you to do over your time at TC and beyond is to make sure that you are honing your skills as a scholar-practitioner. Those of you who are soaking up readings in class and engaging in research projects, be sure that you are consistently contemplating how that scholarship and research would be applied in a work environment. For those students who are working full-time and in internships, make sure that the work in which you are engaging is backed up by quality research and scholarship. If you work hard to be a scholar-practitioner, I think it will make sure that our profession is a balanced one, with knowledgeable students and professionals like you going out there in the world of higher education.

(2) Back up what you say. I encourage you to share your realities and experiences in class, especially because you all have amazing professional and personal lives that contribute so much to the HPSE program! However, be sure that when you share in class and engage in discussions, you attempt to find facts, statistics, research, and/or other stories, particularly ones from the class readings, to corroborate what you are saying. That way what is said in class is always accurate and contributes to moving everyone's knowledge forward while in the program.

(3) I stated this last year, in our newsletter, and I'll say it again. Lean on others. In all your graduate work and beyond, whether it's your fellow students, faculty members and administrators, or friends and family, make sure that you have a support system set up that you can lean on. Graduate school is stressful, and it's difficult to make it through alone without others to help you out, listen to you, and support you in both times of success and times of hard work. We in the HPSE program are here for you if you ever need guidance or support along the way!

Don't hesitate to reach out to me as your advisor at [tcm2131@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:tcm2131@tc.columbia.edu). Good luck with the rest of the year!

## EDUCATION IN ACTION: THE FOUNDING OF THE RURAL STUDENT GROUP AT TC (CONT.)

staff, and faculty who come from rural areas and/or who are interested in rural education issues. Two initial meetings for the organization at the end of last year boasted almost 20 students, staff, and faculty members, who brainstormed ideas for how to make the organization even more effective. Students in attendance hoped to expand to all Columbia campuses and to focus not just on rural education, but rural health issues, too.

After hosting these meetings and hearing ideas from students who hoped to be involved with the Rural Student Group, the organization founded its mission: "The Rural Student Group at Teachers College strives to provide a support system for rural students studying at Teachers College, form a network of students, staff, and faculty focused on rural educational and healthcare issues, honor intersectionality among rural identity and other marginalized social identities, further research and practice around rural educational and healthcare topics, and create and host programming on rural educational and healthcare issues." While they are always open to change, Ty, Dr. Tipton, and Cassie hope to stay true to this mission, focusing on their initial goals of thinking about how to create a support network for rural students and empower educators to focus on rural issues in education.

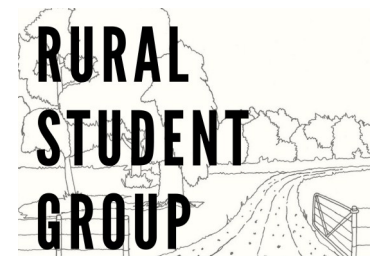
The Rural Student Group at Teachers College is moving forward full-force in its dedication to its goals. Good news has come to the Group, as they officially became a recognized TC student organization this past month, complete with a budget for programming centered around creating support for its members and knowledge for the community about rural education topics. In addition, the group founders plan on reaching out to students from rural areas who are coming to Teachers College so that they know they have a support system if they need it. The Rural Student Group also aims to eventually expand their reach to all of Columbia, providing a network for

rural students, staff, and faculty not just at Teachers College, but other campuses, as well.

The Rural Student Group at Teachers College is an effective representation of the Higher and Postsecondary Education program at TC. It

was founded in personal experiences, but then bolstered through education research and practice and the work of individuals from many departments across TC. Whether the Rural Student Group is helping rural students gain access to higher education at TC, providing support to students once they arrive on campus, or creating a space for the discussion of rural student education issues, this new organization takes issues in the field of education and works to address them. The Rural Student Group at Teachers College hopes students in the TC HPSE program do the same with issues they are passionate about.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Rural Student Group at TC or would like more information about the Group, reach out to Ty McNamee at [tcm2131@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:tcm2131@tc.columbia.edu).



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Byun, S., Irvin, M.J., & Meece, J.L. (2012). Predictors of Bachelor's degree completion among rural students at four-year institutions. *The Review of Higher Education*, 35(3), 463-484.

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MEET CHASE!



### Chase McNamee, Ed.D

My path to Teachers College has been filled with many twists and turns, but I am incredibly thankful that my journey has led me to the HPSE program at TC. I was born and raised in rural Wyoming on a farm and ranch alongside my twin brother, Ty, who is also in the HPSE program, one year ahead of me.

Growing up, we helped our parents take care of our animals and crops while attending school and taking part in various co-curricular activities. My parents always stressed the importance of continuing my education in order to learn more and to complete a degree that would help me find a career in which I was passionate; however, I also faced the reality that my family was from a low-socioeconomic status. If I was going to attend college, it would only be by finding scholarships. Thankfully, through my passion for athletics, I was able to attend college via football scholarship. As an undergraduate, I became involved with different campus organizations and worked for Admissions and the Office of the Registrar. Through my coursework and involvement in campus organizations and in various departments, I became extremely passionate about higher education. I truly loved the way in which coursework, campus involvement, and finding personal connections with others helped me to develop and learn about my own belief systems and values. Because of my love for higher education, I made the decision to pursue my Master's in Counseling at the University of Wyoming to continue studying and working in higher education. It was at this point in my life that I found my passion in higher ed when I began my Student Engagement Graduate Assistantship with the University of Wyoming Alumni Association (UWAA). In this position, I worked to reorganize and rebrand the Wyoming Student Alumni Association, a student organization, that connected students with the UWAA before graduation. This position helped me to understand the connection between students' experiences being recruited to colleges, as well as their experiences at college, and how both of those tie directly into ways in which they may give back after graduation as alumni. It was at this time, that I also spent the second year of my Master's program working as a counselor/ advisor at a local community college in an internship. My

experiences both at the UWAA and the community college started me on the path of thinking even deeper about how students, depending on their past experiences and ways in which they find connections and become involved on campus, will engage with their alma mater upon graduation. After my Master's, I decided to work full-time in alumni relations at the UWAA and began researching possible doctoral programs with faculty that studied philanthropy and alumni relations so I could further research how recruitment processes and student experiences in higher education correlated to giving and engagement as alumni.

Attending TC and living in Manhattan was probably the last place I thought I would end up, graduating from high school with a class of only 24 people in Wyoming; however, I can say it has been one of the best choices I have ever made. When I first walked into the HPSE offices, it was with Ty to meet his faculty advisor, who he would begin working with in the fall of 2015. As I was introduced to Dr. Noah Drezner, my brother's advisor, his name sounded extremely familiar. I then realized that Dr. Drezner was the author of numerous texts on philanthropy and alumni relations that I had just been reading the previous week. It was amazing to meet Dr. Drezner, and I quickly realized that I would love to be a part of the HPSE program at TC. After working hard on my doctoral program applications over that next year, I was fortunate enough to be accepted into the Ed.D. program, I moved to New York City, ready to start my first year. I can honestly say, I would not be where I am without the support of Dr. Drezner and the faculty in the HPSE program. I have been able to research philanthropy and education, through my coursework, as well as my position as the Editorial Assistant for Teachers College's new publication coming out in Fall 2017, *Philanthropy & Education*. I have also been able to join Dr. Drezner on various research projects, including research about foundations at public land-grant institutions and philanthropic giving and engagement at Teachers College. The HPSE program and Dr. Drezner have provided me a space to explore philanthropy and alumni relations research that explores giving and engagement based upon a person's experiences, background, culture, race, values, identity and other characteristics. I am currently pursuing a new job opportunity in development and alumni relations in the city, and I am looking forward to being back on campus this fall!

### LAUREN PERCY'S STORY: FINDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HPSE AND THE MISS AMERICA ORGANIZATION (CONT.)

educational equality a reality through public policy and college counseling. Thanks to my graduate education in HPSE, I understand the solutions and mechanisms to do so. The MAO gave me a seat at the table. I use subject matter from "Curriculum and Instruction in Higher Education" in goal-setting workshops designed for elementary students, and content from "American College Student" while working with go-getters in the New Hampshire Upward Bound program. "Purposes and Policies of Higher Education" and "Theories of Diversity in Higher Education" proved imperative while advising the Governor of and the Commissioner of Education on funding for higher education and the growth of the aeronautical engineering industry in New Hampshire, and discussing the status of the state's refugee population in relation to educational and social equality with local superintendents. I

attribute my seat at the table and what I am able to bring to that table to the community of changemakers at Teachers College, and will work to make the MAO look more like the female population of the United States - a diverse, beautiful, and empowering sisterhood.

At Teachers College, the symbiotic relationship between researchers and practitioners proves that social mobility is truly a team sport. I use that knowledge in my work through the Miss America Organization. It is an honor to welcome you to our community of changemakers. We are so excited to learn from you and collaborate with you.

Sending love,  
Lauren Percy