

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Texas Women in Higher Education Announces 2024 Grant Recipients

SHERMAN, Texas – Texas Women in Higher Education (TWHE) has announced the recipients of their 2024 Institutional Event and Leadership Development Grants, given to only nine women state-wide. TWHE grants are designed to support women in higher education in Texas as they pursue opportunities for advancement and professional growth. Recipients will each pursue individual projects that will support their goals, then will attend the TWHE conference in Corpus Christi, Texas in April 2024. The grant recipients are Khristie Prince, Tyler Junior College; Keren Longshore, M.S., Tyler Junior College; Lory Z. Santiago-Vázquez, Ph.D., and Angela Kelling, Ph.D., University of Houston-Clear Lake; Laurel Smith Stvan, Ph.D., University of Texas at Arlington; Ritu Gairola Khanduri, PhD., University of Texas at Arlington; Cheryl Marcelo, M.Ed., Austin College; Kristie Cerling, Ed.D., Houston Christian University; and Swagata Chakraborty, Ph.D., University of North Texas.

Institutional Event Grant Recipients



Khristie Prince is a Professor of Communication and Education at Tyler Junior College. Her proposal focuses on the intersection of women's leadership and the unique challenges encountered within higher education in the East Texas Region. The primary goal of this project is to enhance visibility and networking opportunities, thereby creating valuable mentorship connections aimed at cultivating an environment of empowerment. This project seeks to advance the presence of women in administrative roles within East Texas. Engaging in this project will afford Prince the chance to apply fresh insights and skills in supporting, empowering, and establishing clear pathways for women administrators in the East Texas region.



Keren Longshore, M.S., is the Assistant Director of Academic Advising and Veteran/Military Services at Tyler Junior College. Her project will be to conduct three book studies within the TJC Women's Group. The books will be specifically written by women for women looking to grow in their leadership roles on campus. Because leadership does not always come with a title, these professional development opportunities are open to all employee types, both faculty and staff, looking to expand their skills. TJC Women's Group has hosted several professional development opportunities over the last year and a half, and this book study would be the first of this genre. This opportunity will give all faculty and staff on TJC's campus the opportunity to grow and sharpen their leadership skills, come together with a growth mindset, and learn from professionals in the field.



Lory Z. Santiago-Vázquez, Ph.D., (pictured above) is the Program Chair of Biotechnology and an Associate Professor of Biology and Biotechnology at University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL). Angela Kelling, Ph.D., (pictured below) is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Program Director of Behavioral Science along with the current chair of the UHCL University Life Committee. Therefore, both are STEM faculty with tenure that hold some form of university leadership position. Recent data have indicated that there are disparities at UHCL in how individuals with certain identities experience their careers, and UHCL faculty do not reflect the student body. There is a need for more community and support to enhance career advancement and leadership opportunities for underrepresented STEM female faculty at all ranks. Drs. Santiago-Vázquez and Kelling are working on enhancing the leadership success and general advancement of individuals underrepresented in UHCL leadership. They both lead Communities of Practice and have submitted grant applications to explore these issues and enhance campus support and sense of community. Their project for this grant is focused on beginning an annual event celebrating trailblazing women leaders in STEM to inspire faculty women in STEM and to facilitate networking and community building opportunities with faculty from UHCL and local colleges.

Leadership Development Grant Recipients



Laurel Smith Stvan, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Texas at Arlington. Her project addresses the causes of gender bias in Wikipedia content by establishing a network to mentor instructors of undergraduate women who are building better representation into Wikipedia pages through classroom editing assignments. The project seeks ways for instructors to balance fitting in time to teach new tasks into an already full curriculum so they can better incorporate page editing skills into their classroom topics without causing instructor burnout. She will kick off the building of this network by establishing contact with other instructors using Wikipedia editing in the classroom who are attending WikiConference North America in Toronto. Participants will brainstorm best practices for effectively training new female editors within undergraduate classrooms.



Ritu Gairola Khanduri, PhD., is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Khanduri will utilize grant funding to conduct an ethnographic engagement that includes open-ended interviews with women leaders, coaches, and talent acquisition officers with a focus on Minority-Serving Institutions. The goal of the interviews will be to learn how leadership talent is understood, spotted, nurtured, and successfully mentored. This project will give her the opportunity to learn directly through interaction with MSI leaders and consultants and build networks, aiding in her professional advancement as a change agent in higher education, which she currently embodies at the organizational level as the American Anthropological Association's (AAA) ombudsperson for the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and in championing student success as the Executive Director of the Lambda Alpha National Anthropology Honor Society. Dr. Khanduri will take her findings to the AAA 2024 conference in Florida and engage with AAA's Leadership Fellows. Dr. Khanduri will welcome the opportunity to share her TWHE project experience

with aspiring and established leaders on her own campus and more broadly in Texas.



Cheryl Marcelo, M.Ed., is the Director of International Programs at Austin College. Through the TWHE Leadership Development Grant, she will participate in the Forum for Education Abroad Annual Conference in March 2024, where she intends to continue learning best practices in her field and also represent her work at Austin College among peers from across the country. Marcelo's work, rooted in global citizenship and social justice, reflect her various projects in guiding students toward becoming responsible actors in local and global affairs. She hopes to share her work on establishing Austin College's first Global Living Learning Community, which centers cultural inquiry, personal consciousness, and knowledge-building among first-year students preparing for international experiences at the undergraduate level. Cheryl's leadership in international education at a small liberal arts college has unique value within the larger landscape of Texas and U.S. higher education that she hopes will resonate with professionals from similar institutions and also be heeded by those from larger university systems.



Kristie Cerling, Ed.D., is the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School at Houston Christian University. Female university presidents are outnumbered 3:1 by their male counterparts. This project focuses on opportunities to grow as a leader through structured mentorship meetings with current female presidents. The primary goal is to establish a mentorship program wherein Cerling will engage with current female university Presidents. These sessions will serve as a platform for her to receive personalized guidance, insights, and wisdom from accomplished leaders in higher education. Through readings and discussions, she intends to grow as a leader who will invest in other female leaders to support them in their professional development and career goals.



Swagata Chakraborty, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Merchandising and Digital Retailing at the University of North Texas. Dr. Chakraborty was nominated for the Teaching Innovation Award at the Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators (ACME) 2024 conference. Her teaching innovation is about incorporating artificial intelligence in the curriculum to train students with tangible skill sets for the competitive job market. She will also be presenting two research papers in the areas of mindful consumption and effective communication of corporate social responsibility-related messages during the ACME 2024 conference. The TWHE grant will help Dr. Chakraborty to attend and present at the ACME 2024 conference, reach a wider audience to share about her work, and also receive meaningful feedback.

The TWHE grants are administered by Del Watson, Ph.D, Director of Faculty Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin, and Martinella Dryburgh, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Posey Leadership Institute and Associate Professor of Business Administration at Austin College. Texas Women in Higher Education (TWHE) is dedicated to developing, advancing, and supporting women employed at colleges and universities across the state of Texas. Unlike organizations focused on one area of responsibility, TWHE serves women in all sectors of

higher education—public and private, university and community college—working in all areas of their institutions.

Texas Women in Higher Education follows the ACE Women’s Network guidance on diversity and inclusion: “The ACE Women’s Network holds inclusion and gender equity as core values to its work. Any individual who is committed to supporting and advancing women in higher education is welcome to participate in the ACE Women’s Network without regard to gender, gender identity, and gender expression.”

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For More Information:

Martinella Dryburgh, Ph.D.

President, Texas Women in Higher Education

mdryburgh@austincollege.edu | 903-813-2015