Applied Anthropology EXPO

UNT
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Anthropology

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Elsa Irby is an applied cultural anthropologist with experience in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and expertise in Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ+ communities. They are influenced by their affinity for diverse cultures and their intersectional identity.

Elsa has extensive experience leading data analysis, developing questionnaires/surveys, identifying cultural insights, conducting secondary research, designing research projects, leading IDIs, facilitating focus groups, and producing creative data storytelling.

As a DE&I Consultant at Kantar's MONITOR, Elsa translates their passion for consumer advocacy among underserved communities into actionable and creative insights. Through an intersectional lens of culture, context, and empathy, Elsa identifies impactful insights among a variety of communities.

Elsa holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Syracuse University and a Master of Science in Applied Anthropology from the University of North Texas.

Caitlin Griffith (she/they) coordinates the UT Climate Leaders Program, a student-led experiential learning program focused on climate action planning. They also manage external office communications through @texassustainability and our newsletter. During her non-traditional undergraduate experience, she tended bar, studied abroad in Fiji, interned at environmental nonprofits and science museums, earned a 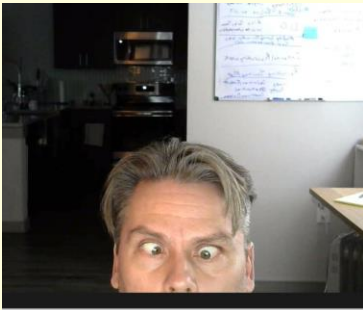grant that secured renewable energy credit funding for the University of North Texas, and ultimately graduated with a bachelor's degree in anthropology. After working as sustainability coordinator at the University of Texas at Dallas, they decided to migrate back to their adoptive home of Austin. She is currently a dual degree-seeking graduate student in the Master of Public Affairs and Community & Regional Planning programs.

Tristen Wheeler (she/they) graduated in the fall of 2020 with a BA in Social Science with a concentration in Anthropology, minor in Geography, and a certificate in Sustainability. Now, they will be graduating with a Master of Public Administration this spring. Tristen currently works in the Dean of Students office at the University of North Texas, overseeing the UNT Food Pantry, the We Mean Green Fund, the UNT Community Garden and the Mean Green Gowns for Grads programs on campus. Their passion is primarily in sustainability education and public service, believing that change starts at the local level. As an advocate for social and environmental justice, Tristen has recently begun her career by serving students who experience food insecurity, increasing environmental biodiversity on campus, and providing eco-friendly solutions to access issues.

Chris Ferrell was awarded his BA in Anthropology in 2013 and his MS in 2016 with a focus on business anthropology and organizational behavior. He secured an internship with Transplace in 2014 where he provided logistics industry updates directly to the CEO. The access to data and senior industry leaders proved invaluable to his thesis work on high driver turnover in long-haul trucking. In 2017 he began serving as the Senior Research Analyst for UNT's College of Engineering managing budgets for all externally funded research projects. By employing a design thinking model, he created a reconciliation process that increased the frequency and ease of budget reporting for 47 Principal Investigators managing 100 research projects. He has been working as a User Experience Researcher at RealPage since 2020 focusing primarily on problem definition, discovery, and research design. He uses his ethnographic skills to serve multiple product teams and strives for transparency, connection, and confidence on every project.

Madeline Fink is a data specialist and researcher working in the non-profit sector. She graduated with a BA in Anthropology with a Minor in International Studies from the University of North Texas in 2016 and received her MS in Applied Anthropology from UNT in 2018. In her current role at Children's Advocacy Center for North Texas (CACNT), she focuses on helping the organization better serve victims of child abuse in the North Texas community through management and analysis of client data. Prior to working with CACNT, Madeline worked with data related to individuals experiencing homelessness in Denton County at United Way of Denton County. She specializes in turning large collections of client information into insightful narratives that help show non-profit organizations how they can improve their data management, as well as access to resources in their community. Outside of her work, she enjoys travelling, reading, and studying the Korean language.

Flo Forno is a recent graduate of UNT's MS in Applied Anthropology. Flo became interested in anthropology in high school because of her background as a third culture kid. She got her undergraduate in cultural anthropology at Binghamton University in New York, then moved to Texas and recently graduated with her MS in Applied Anthropology from UNT. She conducted her thesis research exploring the motivations behind participants' decisions to partake in User Experience Research. She currently works at Red Hat, a software company, as a user experience researcher. She uses her anthropological training to conduct studies on digital experiences and inform her research decisions. At Red Hat, Flo focuses on humanizing the user by advocating for their needs and expectations. She enjoys collaborating with teams of various disciplines to gain multiple perspectives, and showcases the value of anthropology in her daily work. Flo currently lives in Dallas and enjoys visiting White Rock lake with her partner, her dog Sgt. Pepper, and will soon have their first child joining them on their lake walks!

Mike Hoffmann is a 2021 graduate of the UNT Online Applied Anthropology Program. While at UNT he worked with the American Anthropological Association (AAA) studying the various aspects of precollegiate anthropology education, with a focus on high school anthropology. He puts his anthropology degree to use as a high school Social Studies teacher at Kittatinny Regional High School in northwest New Jersey, teaching a four-field high school anthropology course as well as AP World History. Mike's anthropology classes carry out hands-on research in his school community. In addition to teaching, Mike serves on the American Anthropological Association Education and Outreach Advisory Group, is a member of the ongoing AAA Teachers Workshop, and he also is active with the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology Career Readiness Commission. Mike's greatest joy, however, is spending time with his family, including his wife Rachel, his two young boys, and his dog, Willow.

Lisa Quirk graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Medical Anthropology. Seeking a top notch applied anthropology graduate school, Lisa then applied to the UNT dual degree (MS/MPH) program, ultimately completing that program in 2014.

Since graduation, Lisa has kept busy working first as a research coordinator and then as research manager at UT Southwestern. She also has been teaching anthropology at local community colleges since 2015.

In her free time, Lisa enjoys spending time with her loved ones and menagerie of animals.

Danielle Quintanilla graduated from UNT in 2020 with B.A.'s in both Anthropology and History, and a minor in Spanish. She currently works on the Digital Marketing team at Fujitsu Network Communications in Richardson, TX, where she is the primary contact for all things data analytics. Her analyses of marketing performance help influence decisions on the executive level and focus on understanding the customer journey and how to better communicate with FNC's various customers in the telecom industry. She champions using data science to inform without misleading, and grounds analyses in nuance and cultural context of both the subjects and final audience. As an avid learner with way too many interests, she loves the versatility of applied anthropology and enjoys finding new ways to approach business processes using anthropological principles. She also serves on the leadership team for the Fujitsu employee group, Classroom to Corporate (C2C), which helps recent graduates network at the company, gain new skills, and grow their career. Outside of work, Danielle can be found practicing epee fencing and hand-sewing historical costumes.

Angela Ramer is an anthropologist in the Advisory group at HKS. Her work is at the intersection of research and strategy to deliver actionable, empirical insights to inform business and design decisions. Angela brings an ethnographic and user-centered design perspective to high-impact projects that enhance the human experience. Recent work spans healthcare, hospitality, sports, and commercial interiors/workplace. From executive strategic visioning to end user engagement, she values participation at all levels of an organization to ensure representative perspective. Her work helps organizations prioritize investments, integrate user expectations, and culturally align toward a desired future state.

Gi Giamarqo is an M.S. candidate in Applied Anthropology with a medical anthropology focus at UNT. He plans to continue his education toward his Ph.D. in medical anthropology or public health. Gi's research interests are in the reciprocal relationships between material and social environments, how this relationship influences social and political determinants of health, and ontological perspectives of health and being. He orients his research approach through mixed methods and a participatory action research lens. He is completing his thesis research, an exploratory study on understanding perspectives of health and community in Fort Worth, TX. Gi holds a B.A. in Anthropology from UCLA. Before returning to academia for graduate school, Gi was Director of Social Services at healthcare facilities in Southern California. Currently, Gi works as a Research Associate with Casimir Trials, a division of The Emmes Company. He has been a major contributing writer to the design and analysis plans of two awarded research grants for Casimir, with the most recent award being from the U.S. Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs.

Kenneth Saintonge is 2023 graduate of the Applied Anthropology M.S. program at the University of North Texas, with a thesis topic focused on visitor perceptions of nature and the use of Texas State Parks and programming. He worked as AmeriCorps VISTA, at Ray Roberts Lake State Park during his thesis research, while also facilitating environmental and state park educational programming, in addition to outreach and volunteer management activities. He was a SfAA Podcast Project team member from 2016 to 2019. He is interested in the intersections of design, communities of practice, placemaking, and identity. He received a Bachelor's in Visual Arts from Eastern Connecticut State University, with concentrations in Studio Sculpture and Art History. He aspires to continue in a career working with park and museum visitor research and program development. He has also been a Texas Master Naturalist since 2018 and enjoys camping, kayaking, and fossil hunting.

Mandy M. Jordan earned her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a concentration in Wildlife Management and a minor in Anthropology from American Public University in 2017. She entered grad school with the intent to earn her anthropology degree with an emphasis on environmental anthropology. However, following a school shooting in her community, Mandy specialized in sociocultural anthropology and focused on community, religion, trauma, disaster, and resiliency. She earned her Master of Science in Applied Anthropology from the University of North Texas in 2021. Since then, she has worked on several projects, including transforming an underutilized city park into an award-winning therapeutic garden for the Santa Fe community and facilitated a city-wide community engagement plan to utilize free mental health resources at the Santa Fe Resiliency Center. Her work on these projects earned her the award of Galveston County's Top 40 Under 40. Mandy has also consulted, guiding faith-based organizations in their role in the aftermath of trauma and disaster, which carried over from her thesis work. At the beginning of 2022, she worked with Texas A&M University to research tech use in churches during COVID. This resulted in a publication and grant funding for churches in Indiana to purchase and improve tech accessibility for their congregations. Currently, Mandy works for Sam Houston State University as a Research Associate for SHSU Online Research and Strategic Support area. In this role, Mandy researches and evaluates student success and engagement in online courses. She also provides inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility support, leads the Digital Education Summit, and coordinates employee engagement for SHSU Online. Outside of work, Mandy is a member of Women in Leadership at Sam Houston, Moms Demand Action, and Blue Star Mothers.

Cory Wornell is the Youth & Reproductive Health Advisor for the US Agency for International Development (USAID, the largest donor for global development work); she was the test pilot for UNT's dual masters' program in Applied Anthropology and Public Health earning both a MS and MPH in 2008. In her current role, Cory champions youth interests in all Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) interventions through providing guidance on technical approaches and by teaching Positive Youth Development. Furthermore, she is a pivotal player in advancing partnering with and building the capacities of young people and their organizations throughout the Bureau for Global Health (GH). Cory works closely with Gender Advisors and the social and behavioral norms team while providing support to the 35 family planning priority countries; currently, she works most closely with Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and India while also advising multiple global projects in design and implementation.

Cory holds a BA in Human Services (social work) with a minor in psychology, has held multiple mental health positions (counselor in a residential treatment center, Director for Training and Evaluation in a mental health integration project), and has worked in multiple SRH roles (community educator, researcher, trainer, STI contact tracer, patient advocate with Planned Parenthood). Due to her background in mental and physical health integration and with experience in clinical settings, Cory is a leader in GH for ensuring USAID's physical health programming is inclusive of mental health and psychosocial support interventions. She was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Jamaica for three years teaching HIV education with a group of young people while learning the importance cultural context holds for health messages to be truly heard, a realization that brought her to the UNT dual masters' program.