

Jessi L. Smith

Background

As a motivation and diversity scholar I draw from methodological tools and theories of social and personality psychology to test, re-test, and create positive change in the places where we work, live, learn, and play. As the chief research officer at my university, I use my psychological toolbox to center growing equitable infrastructure and amplifying the impact of our researchers' work.

My work specializes in social psychological aspects of identity and culture that removes barriers to the full embodied participation of marginalized and minoritized people. Why is this important to my interest in serving as the Division 8 representative? Because my understanding of motivation and diversity is at the crux of my praxis. I do my best each day to live these values. To identify and remove barriers that limit people's full participation by engaging and collaborating with others. For example, I just completed my term on the NIH Advisory Committee to the Director's Working Group on Diversity and am in the middle of my term serving on the research advisory team for the Advance Resource and Coordination Network, a national effort dedicated to STEM equity.

In our field, we often like (for better or worse) to summarize our work with numbers. As such, my body of work is summarized as more than 70 journal articles and 10 years of continuous external funding, with over \$10 million in external funding from the NIH and NSF. I'm very proud of this funded work because it is a key prototype of using our science to make an impact. The funded work includes longitudinal analyses of Native American and Latino student experiences in STEM; cross-sectional analyses of women's motivation for STEM; and experimental interventions designed to change situations to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty and students. As one example of this work, I had the pleasure of serving as Director and Primary Investigator of the NSF funded ADVANCE IT Project TRACS at Montana State University, which broadened the participation of women faculty in STEM and behavioral science fields, including enhancing research opportunity and capacity, work-life integration, and cultural attunement for the entire campus community. Our team not only led the systemic changes, but we studied the transformation process, with a result of 10 ADVANCE related manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals including papers outside of psychology published in Science, PNAS, and BioScience. The research and impact of our team's work was also featured in media outlets including the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, Science News, Fast Company, and my favorite, Amy Poehler Smart Girls. And the impact does not stop there; because of our successes, when I came to UCCS we thought "let's do it again and see if the work generalizes!" and I now serve as the PI on the NSF funded ADVANCE Adaption Grant called Project CREST, which adapts evidence-based practices to create sustainable equity within the research culture at UCCS.

I've had a wonderful career as a faculty member who set a lot of firsts: the first in my family to go to college, the first to come up through the ranks and achieve full professor in psychology at my (then) university, the first to need a family accommodation in my department; the first to ask for a (queer) partner accommodation for my wife, and now I am the first full time Chief Research Officer at UCCS. And now we are faced with an all-new set of firsts for our community; the first generation of scholars to experience a prolonged pandemic and to experience primarily remote teaching and research. With every challenge, with every crisis, with every win, I bring my diversity and motivational science lens to provide evidence-informed leadership to assess, create, and revise policies and procedures that promote growth and an inclusive culture of psychological science that ultimately improves the planet and human condition. Thank you for considering me.