



AACCS Professional Development Workshops

October 16, 2025

Le Meriden St. Louis Clayton

Workshop 1: **From Conceptualization to Approval – Demystifying the IRB for Easier Protocol Approval** 1 – 5 PM

Overview: This four-hour collaborating workshop will provide researchers and students with essential information of Institutional Review Boards (IRB). The workshop provides a comprehensive exploration of the IRB, moving from research conceptualization to successful protocol approval. Designed for faculty, students, independent contractors, and consultants partnering with higher education, this session will highlight regulatory changes, ensure understanding of IRB requirements and provide tools to navigate the IRB process. Participants will learn hands-on about the purpose, functions, mission, expectations, the importance of ethics and compliance in human subjects' research and necessary procedures for gaining IRB approval.



Dr. Brenda I. Gill has assisted and served with Institutional Review Boards (IRB) related matters since 2006, bringing nearly two decades of experience in research ethics and federal compliance. She began her U.S. career as a Graduate Research Assistant, where she gained early experience in planning and analyzing research studies. As a graduate student, she became actively involved with federal compliance procedures, laying the foundation for her dedication and commitment to Human Subjects ethical research practices.

Workshop 2: **Going Public - How to Craft Sociological Media** 1 – 3 PM

This two-hour workshop equips attendees with practical skills to share their sociological expertise beyond professional circles. In the first hour, Dr. Ellen Meiser from [The Social Breakdown](#) podcast will explore the ins and outs of podcast creation—from choosing the right microphone to how to work editing software—along with creating the sound and feel of a show. The second hour, led by Dr. Sophie Nathenson of [Widespread Wellness](#), her youtube channel, shifts focus to YouTube video production, covering everything from camera setups and lighting to editing platforms and audience engagement strategies. Both presenters will weave in practical “how-to” tips with discussion about the unique challenges and opportunities of doing Public Sociology in today’s opinionated landscape.

Ellen T. Meiser is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. She is the author of *Making It: Success in the Commercial Kitchen* (Rutgers University Press, 2024) and co-creator and co-host of *The Social Breakdown*, a free and accessible sociology podcast and learning resource.



(PHMRC) in 2015.

Sophie Nathenson is a medical sociologist, health consultant, and the designer and founding Director of Oregon Tech's Population Health Management B.S. program (BS-PHM). Dr. Nathenson launched a Population Health Management Research Center



Workshop 3: **Publish Your Teaching and Research Efforts! A How-To Workshop**

1 – 3 PM

In this two-part workshop, two editors will introduce you to strategies to publish your teaching innovations and research findings. First, Aaron Pitluck will introduce you to the American Sociological Association's Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology (TRAILS). This is a peer-reviewed platform for instructors to submit their teaching activities, assignments, and syllabi to support others' scholarly teaching. Aaron will share the publication criteria for TRAILS and tips for how you can make a successful submission. Second, Bruce Friesen, Chief Editor of AACSB's flagship journal the Journal of Applied Social Science, will comment on rewards working professionals and academics can experience as a result of publishing their own work. He'll share tips on general publishing protocols and expectations and how to submit your work to JASS.

Bruce K. Friesen is Associate Professor of Sociology and Department Chair at the University of Tampa where he has been teaching since 2005. From 1995 to 2005, Dr. Friesen served as Assistant/Associate Professor of Sociology at Kent State University in Ohio. Dr. Friesen specializes in the Sociology of Human Rights and Applied Sociology. He is the author of numerous articles and three books, including *Moral Systems and the Evolution of Human Rights* (Springer 2015). Dr. Friesen currently serves as Immediate Past President of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology and Chief Editor of the Journal of Applied Social Science.



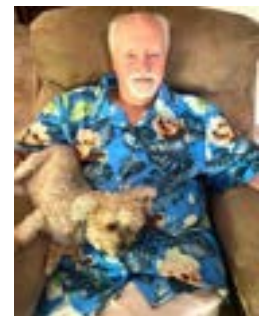
Aaron Pitluck is a Professor of Sociology at Illinois State University, a member of the International Sociological Association's Executive Committee, and on the Editorial Board for TRAILS. Last academic year he was a Visiting Scholar at the American Bar Foundation. Dr. Pitluck is an economic sociologist who studies contemporary capitalism from a cultural and postcolonial perspective. His current Applied/Public Sociology project explores the peculiar social structure of conflicts of interest.

Workshop 4: **The Praxis of Principles in a Conflicted Culture - Conversations about the ways in which sociology is useful in faith-based settings.**

1 – 3 PM

In this workshop, the Reverend L. Kyle Hern, retired Pastor and former District Superintendent of the United Methodist Church, will guide the attendees through the ways in which sociology can be useful in faith based or faith aligned settings. Using his extensive experience in both formal and informal faith based settings, Rev. Hern will discuss with attendees how they might use sociology and the application of principles, sociological or otherwise, within their own practices, activism, and communities. You can learn more about one application here, <https://flatlandkc.org/commentary/dead-pets-and-grief-faith-leaders-embrace-new-chaplaincy/>

Reverend Hern retired from a long career as a United Methodist Pastor in 2013 - having started that career while completing his BA degree in sociology at Central Methodist University before moving on to complete his graduate work at St. Paul's School of Theology in Kansas City MO. Rev. Hern has applied his skill set as the pastor in churches big and small (he was even televised for a few years), as the District Superintendent of the Kansas City South District and member of the Missouri UMC Bishop's cabinet, and as an activist in support of progressive goals and issues. In retirement, in addition to being the President of the Missouri Methodist Benevolent Association, he has primarily focused on developing a Community of Compassion as the co-founder and facilitator, which is a supportive community of people, religious and non-religious, who are committed to the study and the practice of compassion in alignment with the International Charter for Compassion.



Workshop 5: Mobilizing a Community-Wide Response to Poverty

3 – 5 PM

This session will focus on the efforts of one community located at the southernmost tip of Texas to shift the paradigm regarding poverty. Participants will hear from several of the Lieutenants enlisted by Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez to coordinate the war on poverty in this community of over 900,000 people. The discussion will walk participants through a review of the community's demographic profile followed by the initial efforts to launch the taskforce. Attendees will be provided with their perspective on the development of the 150 plus member coalition and the organizational structure that has been created to identify, address and remove the causes and conditions of poverty in Hidalgo County. The session promises to be an honest discussion of the intricacies and complexities of addressing poverty in one of the most ethnically unique places in America today.

Mario Reyna is a distinguished leader with over four decades of combined military and educational service. He served 20 years in the United States Air Force, specializing in financial management, planning, and budgeting at both national and international levels. Following his military career, Reyna dedicated 23 years as Dean of the Division of Business, Public Safety, and Technology at South Texas College, where he spearheaded innovative programs, strengthened community partnerships, and championed student success.



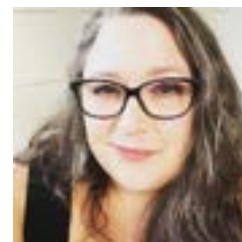
Mr. Jaime Longoria currently serves as the Executive Director of the Hidalgo County Community Service Agency (HCCSA), a role he has held for the past ten years. Under his leadership, the agency has significantly broadened its scope of services to include emergency relief and expanded support programs for residents throughout Hidalgo County. Mr. Longoria was instrumental in the development of the Access to Success Program and led the recent implementation of Operation Real 'Em In, a dropout recovery initiative in partnership with Region One Education Service Center.

Workshop 6: Out of the Classroom & Into the Streets!

3 – 5 PM

As this conference demonstrates, so many of us in the academy pursue knowledge and a role in the production of knowledge because we seek, not just to better understand the world around us, but to shape it based on our understanding. There are plenty of important ways to influence the world outside academia from inside a classroom, but ultimately, if your desire is to effect systemic change in our society, you will eventually find yourself meeting change where it happens – in the streets.

In this workshop, Gillian will draw on her own experiences transitioning from a decade spent in academia to a career in community organizing to highlight key strategies in personal and professional development for those looking to bring their academic expertise to movements for social change. We will talk about how our academic skillsets can serve as valuable assets in the fight for justice as well as some of the ways our training as scholars can serve as obstacles to working in community with others. Finally, we'll discuss the practicalities of where academics can best fit into the professional work of on-the-ground-organizing.



Workshop 7: Assess Darn Near Anything - A Guide To Value Rubrics

3 – 5 PM

One of the challenges educational institutions face as they seek academic reaccreditation is the need to demonstrate that students are not just "passing classes" but learning skills. General Education assessment, particularly focused on undergraduate courses, is now a major focus of external accreditors. Dr. Colin Suchland, PhD, helped lead Lincoln Land Community College through recent reaccreditation via the Higher Learning Commission. He spent seven years as a faculty assessment coordinator and five of those years as faculty chair



of the campus Learning Outcomes Assessment Team. This workshop will focus on the tools and techniques used at LLCC, with a special focus on using the VALUE Rubrics created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

In addition to his work on his own campus, Suchland has presented on assessment topics at numerous national conferences and has published a co-authored article on student self-efficacy and High impact Practices (HIPs). He now serves at the community college representative for Grand Challenges in Assessment, working on a best-practices model for co-curricular assessment.

The **AACS Professional Development workshops** are invited workshops that take place on the first day of the conference before the opening reception. These workshops are included with full conference registration, but are also open to attendees from the local community who just want to attend (for a lesser fee) the Professional Development Workshops for one afternoon. The theme for the 2025 conference is “**Scholar Activism: All Around Us and Within**”. You can find more information about the conference and the workshops [HERE](#).

We do hope to meet you in St. Louis!



Figure 1 Photo taken from the top of the Arch by Colin Suchland - AACS Secretary