

***AcademiCast* Transcript**
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Allen: Changes in the Texas Tech Library make working in groups easier for students.

Hello everyone, I'm Katie Allen and this is *AcademiCast*, brought to you by Texas Tech University.

The new GroupWorks area in the Texas Tech Library is now available for students to use. It's an interactive media area located on the first floor and equipped with all new furniture, digital monitors, webcams, plugs-ins for up to five portable devices, a media well that provides power and network access, and much more. The stations allow students to work on group projects more easily. Justin Daniel, TTU Systems Librarian, says it's all about students being able to work together near and far.

Daniel: *It's all about group work, hence the name GroupWorks. It's about them working together from on campus, across campus, across the state and wherever their other group members might be. It's also about them being able to come in and sit down three, four, five, eight at a time and work together as a group to accomplish whatever class tasks they have.*

Allen: The stations are primarily set up for PC users; however, Apple users can check out adapters from the library service desk. More equipment will be added to the stations in the coming weeks.

Texas Tech bat researcher Tigga Kingston, an assistant professor of biological sciences, recently received a five-year, \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to create a network for bat researchers in Southeast Asia. The funding will allow researchers to collect and share data, design and implement conservation methods, and use their research as a teaching tool for students.

Our next integrated scholar feature is Dr. Tara Stevens, an associate professor and program coordinator for educational psychology. Here's Provost Bob Smith with more.

Smith: Dr. Tara Stevens, a faculty member in Texas Tech's College of Education, specializes in the field of educational psychology and leadership. She is a respected teacher among her students and colleagues, a leading researcher in her field and a dedicated service provider. Furthermore, her main focus is in finding solutions to enhancing academic performance in the classroom among students of all ages and abilities. Her interest in psychological theory led her to want to pursue a career in academia.

Stevens: *I think I started in psychology with an interest in wanting to know what motivated people to act in certain ways, and I started in a very traditional sense through a general psychology program. With a bachelor's degree in psychology, I was fortunate*

enough to be employed by a local mental health facility and became involved in clinical work and realized that wasn't the area that interested me most and that I was really more interested in theory and explanations as opposed to treating individuals.

Smith: Dr. Stevens teaches many courses in educational psychology. Most of the courses emphasize subject material in human development and early childhood education. Recent examples include: Human Development in Education, Principles of Educational and Psychological Measurement, and Application of Studies in Maturation and Learning to Early Childhood Education. In parallel to her teaching, much of Dr. Stevens research is done working in schools and developing interventions to help students of all genders, cultures and learning styles find success in the classroom.

Stevens: *I am licensed to practice school psychology in the state of Texas, so I work individually with students to help assess students' learning problems, also disabilities that are associated with educational problems, which include Autism, emotional disturbances, also learning disabilities and ADHD. So, I will not only play an important role in that assessment process but also help to develop interventions and carry out those interventions and consult with other individuals that are central to the student's education. I have the opportunity to work in a number of different schools—schools that are in urban settings, as well as in rural areas, elementary schools, as well as high schools. I work with children in the schools as young as 2 and as old as 21.*

Smith: The field of educational psychology is unique, as it blends two important areas of study. Dr. Stevens says that many times baccalaureate graduates question how they can help others learn and these questions often help them find the educational psychology graduate program at Texas Tech.

Stevens: *The purpose of educational psychology is to use psychological theory to improve education. We have students who come from a variety of different areas. We have students who have been educators, but we also have students who are coming from the theoretical perspectives of psychology. It's almost as if, unfortunately, students stumble upon us, and when they do they realize, 'That's what I've been looking for.' It's usually the students who maybe they've already taught, they've already worked with children, maybe they're in human development and they do a lot of one-to-one work as caregivers and they've always wondered why some children advance more quickly than other children in certain learning tasks. Maybe they've always wondered why some children are more hyperactive or more active or have certain needs that are more different than other children, and they feel like if they had those answers they could be more successful in the work that they're doing. When they find us, they think, 'This is where the answers are, and this is so helpful. I wish that I'd known about it before.'*

Smith: Dr. Stevens is a great example of a faculty member who melds her research, teaching and service projects carefully and effectively. She says having a clearly defined purpose helps her prioritize and work toward achieving her career goals.

Stevens: *Something that I'm finally discovering is the importance of having a clearly defined purpose. What am I trying to accomplish? What am I doing? And focusing on that purpose. If you have a purpose and your activities are meaningful, then it becomes pretty simple in terms of prioritizing and organizing oneself. However, if that purpose is lost as you advance into academia and different demands are asked of you, then it can become quite confusing. So, I think it's important to always have that purpose and see how those new tasks as they're assigned fit within that purpose, and if they don't make adjustments and changes so that you are continuously moving forward to achieve those goals.*

Smith: We would like to congratulate Dr. Tara Stevens for her great work as an integrated scholar at Texas Tech. Her ability to serve as an effective researcher, teacher and outreach provider makes her worthy of our recognition. Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Allen: Thanks, Dr. Smith. While on a study abroad program in Italy, Texas Tech undergraduate researcher Heather Darnell discovered a new passion for music on the streets of Sicily. Darnell, who is working with Texas Tech's Center for Undergraduate Research, is hoping to gain deeper insight into Italian lullabies. Her advisor, Dr. Thomas Cimarusti, says he's enjoyed learning alongside his student and recommends that other faculty work together with undergraduate researchers.

Cimarusti: *It's been a fantastic experience for me, especially as a junior scholar, because I always feel like I am constantly learning too. I remember when I was in college thinking of these professors as these know-alls, and we're not. It's fun to learn, and so yes, I would highly recommend it. Of course there is a time issue. It does involve time. But I think if you really enjoy the topic and you really enjoy the student and that discourse, then it's incredibly rewarding.*

Allen: I'm Katie Allen for *AcademiCast*.