

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
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Hart: This is AcademiCast—Texas Tech University’s podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Nicole Hart, and I’ll be covering the top academic and research stories on campus. Later in the program, Provost Bob Smith will spotlight Student of Integrated Scholarship Angela Bourne. First, the news...

The Free Market Institute is among the newest additions to Texas Tech. With support from a private donor in West Texas, the institute was established to advance scholarship in the area of free market economics. At the head of the institute is Benjamin Powell, a visiting professor in the Rawls College of Business and a senior fellow at the nonprofit Independent Institute. Powell explains that the institute is dedicated to educating others about private enterprise.

Powell: The mission of the Free Market Institute is to promote the teaching and study of Free Market Economics. We’re going to do that on a research basis here at the university. We’re going to do it teaching to our colleagues and peers at other institutions. Working with graduate students here and working with undergraduates and the general public, so part of what we do is public programming that we invite the community into.

Hart: Powell says the institute’s long-range vision is to make Texas Tech one of the premier places in the world to study free market economics. To achieve this goal, he says it is key for the institute to offer lectures and programs that will interest those in academia as well as the broader public.

Powell: In the short run, the goal is for the institute to provide quality programming that will interest faculty, students and the community to come to here. As part of that, we have Walter Williams coming on September 19th to give a public lecture for us that we think is going to make a big splash in this community. And to provide quality education in the classroom and attract students to come to Texas Tech specifically because they’re interested in free market economics. I know there are six Ph.D. students starting in the fall already who have come here for exactly that reason, and we’ve just opened our doors.

Hart: To learn more about the Free Market Institute, visit academicast.ttu.edu, where we have a link to the institute’s website.

Turning to other news...

Texas Tech is gaining acclaim as a high-value education destination. Affordable Colleges Online has named TTU one of the most affordable universities in the country. Compared with other large public universities, Texas Tech stood out because of its lower tuition and fees, which helps to restrain student debt.

TTU is extending its global reach. The Texas Tech University System is exploring an educational partnership with Nigeria's Technical University. The partnership would allow Nigerian students to complete the final year of their degree programs at Texas Tech. Likewise, Texas Tech students would have the opportunity to study in Nigeria.

To learn more about this story and others, visit our website at academicast.ttu.edu.

Along with a commitment to academics, Students of Integrated Scholarship pursue a course of lifelong study through their involvement in active learning experiences. Modes of active learning include internships, service learning, undergraduate and graduate research, and opportunities to study abroad. In this edition of AcademiCast, Provost Bob Smith spotlights Student of Integrated Scholarship Angela Bourne.

Smith: As a doctoral candidate, Angela Bourne brings a refreshing perspective to interior design education and practice. Bourne is a nontraditional student in the area of environmental design—a wife and a mother she is also an accomplished interior designer and has spent the past two decades as a professor in Canada. To augment her credentials as an academician, she has been pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental design through the College of Human Sciences at Texas Tech.

Bourne: I thought, “Well, I should really learn to be a researcher because if I want to put to practice and get people to pay attention to me, basically, I need to document in a research form.” I was at a conference for educators, and I met Dr. Gaines, here at Texas Tech. And I heard her speak about her work designing classrooms for children with autism. So I thought, “Wow, that’s a really good match for me.” And so one of her colleagues said to me at the conference, “Well, why don’t you apply to Tech?” So I did. And called Dr. Shoyer, who’s retired now, and she immediately said, “We’d love to have you here.” So here I was, in a matter of months, packing up everything at home, leaving my husband on his own, put our two children—who are young adults—off at university to carry on as I had a bit of a midlife crisis and went back to school.

Smith: Bourne specializes in creating spaces for people with special needs, including those with autism and Down’s syndrome. She explains that her interest in the field has been deeply personal. And, her focus has led her to outreach and research opportunities that have been greatly rewarding.

Bourne: I’ve always been interested in special populations. What really got me thinking about this was my brother, who had Down’s syndrome, passed away. And he was basically on my shirttails for my whole life—we’re less than two years apart in age. And from a very young age I was teaching him how to adapt to our neurotypical environment. And there was really not a good place for him to go that was a secure environment that nurtured his capabilities. So I really thought, “Well, why don’t we design spaces for people to live in a community that’s self-sustaining, provides work opportunities and quality of life, and also provides residence and social opportunities. So that leads me to my volunteer work here in Lubbock. So I volunteered with a couple of groups here, and little did I know that there were

these communities in Texas that were thriving, so that's where I turned my research direction.

Smith: Bourne has worked with design Professor Kristi Gaines, serving as a research assistant and a teaching assistant, in addition to helping Gaines with her forthcoming book. Bourne also has been successful at securing grant funding, resulting in part from work with Gaines and Professor Debajyoti Pati (De-bay-oatee Pa-tee).

Bourne: The goal is to come up with some benchmarks for architects, designers and planners to use in developing housing and entrepreneurial activities for this population. So I have an overlap with mental health and working through dementia. And it just so happens that this population, especially the people with Down's syndrome, they have early onset dementia, and they're living a lot longer than they ever did, which is wonderful. But helping them cope with their life is what environmental designers do. They look at how the built environment affects behavior and how we can create design interventions to give them better access and make accommodations so they can have a higher quality of life.

Smith: Bourne says Students of Integrated Scholarship may find their educational horizons broadened if they look beyond their own disciplines, seeking knowledge and collaborations with others.

Bourne: I really like that I've been able to integrate and work with a variety of people—the architects, we collaborate with urban planners, the psychologists, the people in the special-needs populations; like Dr. Gaines has worked with the teachers and all kinds of therapists over the years—that really help us do our job better. Because without the integration, we don't know what works best; we rely on a lot of information from people. To do what we do best is to prepare design interventions, so that people can use their space in a way that's conducive to their needs.

Smith: The legendary American educational reformer, John Dewey (1859-1952) noted, (and I quote): "To find out what one is fitted to do, and to secure an opportunity to do it, is the key to happiness." A lifelong learner, Bourne, appears to have found a mission and fulfillment in her plans to continue research into design solutions for special-needs people. She tells us that after obtaining her doctorate, she will carry on teaching and serving others as she journeys along the path of Integrated Scholarship. To all of this we say: Bravo and best wishes! Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Hart: Thanks, Dr. Smith! Finally, AcademiCast would like to congratulate all of the faculty and students who were recognized at this year's Faculty Honors Convocation. We at AcademiCast applaud your commitment to teaching, research, creative activity, and service to the university.

That concludes this edition of AcademiCast. If you would like to learn more about the program and the stories featured here, please visit our website at academicast.ttu.edu. Join us again in two weeks as we spotlight the top academic and research news from Texas Tech University, as well as profile Student of Integrated Scholarship Juan De Loera.