

AcademiCast Transcript
Texas Tech University
October 19, 2011

Pierce: Hello and welcome to *AcademiCast* – Texas Tech University’s biweekly podcast series from the Office of the Provost. I’m Rachel Pierce, and I’ll be covering the top academic stories on campus. Later in the program, you’ll hear from Provost Bob Smith as he features the accomplishments of Integrated Scholar Dorothy Chansky, a professor in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

And now, the news...

Texas Tech is partnering with researchers at the University of Oklahoma to lead the South-Central Climate Science Center. The center was recently formed by the US Department of the Interior to study the effects of climate change in the South-Central US. That region includes Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Louisiana.

Political science professor Katharine Hayhoe is also a director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech.

***Hayhoe:** Climate change is a complex issue. We need people who have expertise in all kinds of different areas. We need climate scientists, like myself, to be working with people side by side with people who understand our water resources, people who understand our plants and trees and shrubs, and others who understand our animals and our fish that occupy the South-Central Plains.*

Pierce: In addition to OU, Texas Tech is working with Oklahoma State University, Louisiana State University, and the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory at Princeton University. Researchers are also collaborating with the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribal nations.

Education professor Comfort Pratt is traveling to Spain in an effort to expand the college’s study abroad opportunities. Professor Pratt joins representatives from six other higher education institutions based in the US. The group is meeting with faculty from universities in Madrid, Segovia, Salamanca, and other Spanish cities. Professor Pratt and others were invited to explore Spain by the Castilla y León government and tourist board.

The Texas Tech University System is showcasing its institutions’ work in the TV program “Inside Texas Tech.” System chancellor Kent Hance hosts the show, which airs Thursdays at 8 p.m. on KTXT Channel 5. New episodes of “Inside Texas Tech” debut the first week of the month, and the program is re-aired the following weeks.

College of Visual and Performing Arts associate professor Dorothy Chansky is a triple threat on the stage and in academia. Not only can she act, sing, and dance with aplomb, but Dr. Chansky also delivers intensity through her teaching, research, and service projects. Her contributions at Texas Tech have gained her the distinction of Integrated Scholar. Provost Bob Smith spotlights associate professor Dorothy Chansky.

Smith: Ever since she was 6 years old, Dr. Dorothy Chansky has been involved in theater. Her interest in the performing arts led her to minor in theater as an undergraduate & theater was the focus of her studies in graduate school. Yet a restlessness to practice the theater craft compelled Dr. Chansky to leave her graduate program after a year.

Chansky: *I wanted to go to New York and be a professional, and so that's what I did. I was quite fortunate. I was able to get my equity card the summer between college and graduate school, so when I went to New York, I was already able to go to professional auditions.*

Smith: Dr. Chansky's acting career took her to a number of theaters and studios.

Chansky: *I was an actress for 7 years, and I was quite fortunate. I didn't have any work with big famous people, but I didn't have to waitress or be an office temp more than maybe the first few months I was there. I did a number of television commercials. I was in children's theater. I was in dinner theater. I went on tour, and I went to a lot of auditions.*

Smith: Dr. Chansky also had a flair for playwriting. She crafted the musical "The Brooklyn Bridge" to creatively portray the struggles that were endured during the construction of this landmark structure. The play was not only an outlet for creative writing. Through the project, Dr. Chansky also learned about the production process. She wrote contracts, hired staff & raised money to fund the performance.

Chansky: *The play ran off Broadway in New York for six weeks. I got a nice write-up in The New York Times. And that convinced me that what I loved was the bigger picture – seeing how the whole thing went together. I then went into arts management because from my perspective after producing my show, that was the bigger picture.*

Smith: During her stint in arts management, Dr. Chansky worked in public relations for the New York Philharmonic. But a desire to write and do research drew her back to graduate school. She finished the master's degree she had started years earlier and then earned a doctorate in performance studies from New York University.

Chansky: *I realized that I loved research; I loved writing; I loved scholarship. And I enrolled in the Ph.D. program at NYU. It was that period that getting invested in scholarship that really persuaded me that that was what I loved.*

Smith: Dr. Chansky has lectured at the College of William and Mary, Barnard College, and Hunter College, as well as at Canadian universities. Having the opportunity to work with graduate students drew her southward to Texas Tech in 2005.

Chansky: *Well, mentoring theater students is fantastic, because you are mentoring them in many ways, not just as scholars, not just as artists. You're deeply involved in their personal growth and in a whole multiplicity of interests. One of the things I love about teaching graduate students is that a lot of them are older than traditional-aged undergrads. And so you have to be really sensitive to their needs as parents, as perhaps the anchors of multigenerational families, but the payoff there is that they bring so much to their art, to their scholarship. They bring a perspective that isn't always there in a traditional undergraduate class. And so mentoring them is also a teaching session for me.*

Smith: Dr. Chansky's research focuses on 20th and 21st century American theater. Her first book—titled “Composing Ourselves”—was published just before she arrived at Texas Tech, and it concentrates on the Little Theater Movement that took place between 1912 and 1925. More recently, she has written about the theatrical portrayals of food and domestic labor and about educators' adaptations of translated plays. Dr. Chansky has also served on university committees that evaluate research proposals in the arts and humanities. All things considered, Dr. Chansky says the best part of her job is being in the classroom.

Chansky: *Intense discussion, I guess that part of teaching was definitely my favorite part of being a student as well as to hunker down with an idea, or question or text and everybody just kind of dig in, in an intense way. ... It's rejuvenating; it keeps me on my toes.*

Smith: Dr. Chansky believes that good time management can help faculty who want to balance their teaching, research, and creative efforts.

Chansky: *One way to balance is by breaking up the day and that's very important for me. I also know that I work better at certain parts of the day than other times, so I try to make sure that I have at least a block of time that I know I'm going to be fresh – that enables you to make maximum use of pieces of time that may not be as big as you hoped they were.*

Smith: That's a good cue from associate professor Chansky. In her role as an Integrated Scholar, she has helped direct her students' education and contributed valuable insights and guidance for advancement of the arts.

Thanks for listening! I'm Bob Smith.

Pierce: Thanks, Dr. Smith!

And finally, preLaw magazine names Texas Tech's School of Law as one of the Best Value Law Schools in the nation. Texas Tech Law secured the No. 20 spot on the list. PreLaw magazine ranks schools according to tuition affordability, bar passage rates, and employment after graduation. This is the fourth straight year that Texas Tech Law was named a Top 20 Best Value School by preLaw magazine.

That concludes this edition of *AcademiCast*. Join us again in two weeks for more academic news from Texas Tech University. Thanks for listening!