

Transforms Newsletter

Advancing Faculty Equity at SF State

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Faculty Highlight

Discussing Mental Health and Race with Dr. Supriya Misra, [Assistant Professor of Public Health](#)

By Valerie Francisco-Menchavez,
Assistant Dean of Restorative and
Transformative Racial Justice

On a Tuesday afternoon, Dr. Supriya Misra, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health, walked into my office in HSS with a wide smile, with which I returned along with a hug. Blocking off an hour of our day to be in conversation about Dr. Misra’s educational journey and her many current projects was a treat for me, as I can deduce that her time—split between teaching, advising, coordinating a research group, continuing and completing research projects, service commitments to her department, SF



State, and other academic communities, and of course, her own personal and political commitments—was precious. At the start of the semester, I felt grateful to be able to learn about my colleague’s trajectory before Dr. Misra came to SF State and what is keeping her busy these days.

Researching Mental Health, Race, and Racism

Learning about Dr. Misra’s research interests felt exciting. From past talks, I knew her work centered around mental health and immigrant communities—a scholarly and personal interest I share. When I asked her about her work’s focus, she stated she is “interested in how the ways people treat one another affect their mental health.” Dr. Misra has examined how racism, stigma, and trauma impact mental health outcomes and is pivoting towards the ways that people turn to how we heal. Dr. Misra is now thinking about “the ways we describe and explain

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Program Highlights

Professor Dawn-Elissa Fischer at the NSF ADVANCE Convening



From left: Dawn-Elissa Fischer, Carmen Domingo, and Sue Rosser, June 2023

When members of the Transforms team were invited to submit to an invited panel on the effects of COVID-19 on Faculty Scholarship, we knew this was an opportunity to showcase our efforts launched in 2020. The ADVANCE Equity in STEM Community Convening was held June 5-7th in Durham, North Carolina. The convening is the annual NSF conference of the ADVANCE program. Professor Dawn-Elissa Fischer (ANTH)

led the authorship and presentation titled "Systematic Faculty Change in the Midst of the Parallel Pandemics of COVID-19 and Racism." The presentation focused on the ways campuses need to provide equity in faculty programs and recognize and intervene in the intersecting axes of racism and sexism in structuring faculty



Professor Fischer at the NSF Advance Convening, June 2023



Representative Nancy Pelosi gives keynote address to SFSU at the 2023 convocation.

experience, be it with COVID-19 interruptions and with career advancement. The audience noted that while the ADVANCE awardees share similar problems, SFSU was one of the very few awardees to create an intervention to support faculty. Dean Carmen Domingo and former provost Sue Rosser were in attendance.

Ashmi Desai to join Transforms as Co-Lead of the PERC Program

Transforms is delighted to announce that Ashmi Desai, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communications Studies, will co-lead the Promoting Equity and Relationships amongst Colleagues (PERC) program this year. PERC is a collective of faculty and staff who have received extensive training in restorative practices. We are a community of learners rooted in the ongoing practice of restorative conversations so that we can hold spaces and opportunities for staff and faculty to address conflicts that do not rise to the level of Title IX and/or Discrimination, Harassment, & Retaliation (DHR) policy violation. For more information, see: <https://transforms.sfsu.edu/perc>.

Transforms Shared Program Information at the University Convocation

For a second year, our ADVANCE Transforms team disseminated our efforts at a table during the Fall 2023 Convocation. Professor Sally Pasion and Project Lead Ilse Gonzalez greeted faculty staff,

and administrators, offering program resources and conversations about our team's efforts to advance racial and gender equity for faculty. We shared Transforms program information: Promoting Equity & Relationships among Colleagues (PERC), The ADVANCE Hub



Sally Pasion, Professor of Biology

information for upcoming application deadlines, and copies of our Transforms Newsletters. All information is available on our website: <https://transforms.sfsu.edu>.

Transforms Hosted a Welcome Back Lunch



Faculty gather to connect as the new academic year begins.

The Transforms team held a Welcome Back Luncheon for faculty and staff on September 28th in LIB121. Each semester a lunch welcomes faculty and staff as part of our goal to reduce isolation and create a campus community that includes faculty connections across silos of departments. Reducing isolation is part of a strategy to promote intersectional racial and gender equity for faculty advancement. At the Fall luncheon, we served a delicious spread of sandwiches, salads, and snacks, including mooncakes that have become a Transforms signature offering. New and returning faculty

exchanged ideas about how to get started with the new term and reconnected as we provided information on Transforms. Professor Anoshua Chaudhuri invited faculty to join the Transform/CEETL Faculty Writing Meetups, discussing the role these protected writing times can play in forming a community and advancing scholarship. Thank you to WISE and CoSE for partnering and providing the funds and amazing staff members



Faculty gather at the Welcome Back 2023 luncheon. to organize the food and drinks.

Upcoming Events

"Stories and Strategies for Reclaiming our Time and Humanity in Higher Education."

Professor Angela Fillingim
San Francisco State University
November 28th
3-4:30 pm

More information and venue to be announced soon at:

<https://transforms.sfsu.edu/>

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mental health experiences, how we talk about mental health, impacts how we respond to them." For example, if our society describes mental health as a biological issue, it is treated with medication, but if our society considers capitalism as a factor in mental health, then perhaps our solutions and treatments would look and feel different. Dr. Misra insists that the field of Public Health field critically considers social contexts alongside epidemiological and psychiatric, to name a few, analyses when it comes to studying mental health as a public health issue.

In her body of work, Dr. Misra also looks at "psychosis," which she said is medically described as "the disconnection from a shared reality, medically defined as having hallucinations, hearing and seeing things that other people don't, or delusions, where you believe things that other people don't." In her research, she realized that even in this working definition of psychosis, there were evident inequities for immigrant groups. While this is a social identity that Dr. Misra doesn't identify with, she noticed that immigrants silently suffered from mental health diagnoses that did not accurately capture their experiences. Many immigrants could not identify with a pathological diagnosis of the standing definition of psychosis. As Dr. Misra puts it, "For some people, the [former definition] explains their experience, but there is heterogeneity. For some people, the medical model is really meaningful, and medications changed their lives, and doctors telling them they had a diagnosis made them feel less ashamed. For other people, specifically for these diagnoses, are a source of harm, are a source of forced medication or forced treatment, so in trying to write my papers differently, I had to go to the source of the language."

In this way, Dr. Misra opens up the definitions and possibilities of psychosis to make room for how immigrants experience a symptom such as "hearing voices" as not necessarily distressing. Rather, it could align with their religious and spiritual beliefs and cultural practices. She insists on expanding the social factors included in the study of psychosis, such as racial discrimination and racism. Dr. Misra

warns that medicalizing people's experiences can be harmful, "...psychosis might be a harmful construct for immigrants." She advocates collecting more data on these topics but also understands that the "psychiatric system is a carceral system," and this line is one she is balancing. She includes aspects such as histories of Asian Americans and South Asians, colonialism, countries of origin, war, migration, and incorporation to the US as potentially key in understanding psychosis for immigrant communities. Dr. Misra is passionate about these research fields and creates her questions and methods with care and intentionality. This ethic of care for the communities and participants in her study and her research collaborators—including SF State students—exemplifies how she is a firebrand of a scholar.

Currently, Dr. Misra's lab focuses on two projects, one looking at how to expand our understanding of experiences labeled as "psychosis" among immigrant communities and another on how to promote intergenerational understanding about the impact of racism and trauma on mental health among Asian American families, both with student researchers.

Creating Her Place in Higher Education

Dr. Misra's academic pedigree is as impressive as how she made decisions about her educational path in the elite institutions where she studied. She earned a BA in Psychology with a concentration in Neuroscience and minors in Biology and Creative Writing at Stanford, where she co-founded an undergraduate mental health club. She also earned an MA in Psychology at Stanford in an undergraduate-to-graduate program. In our conversations about her experiences as an undergraduate, she juxtaposed learning about emotions and the physiological examination of such in the brain alongside her experience of transitioning into college and young adulthood, which included dealing with her emotions. She mentioned that being part of the Indian and South Asian communities and the stigma attached to mental health in those communities—that one might not talk about these issues with their families—also informed her decision to research the topic. From her scholarship, she discussed

the "fatalistic" ways that Asian Americans conceptualize personal problems as a set of issues one is given in a deterministic way. Asian Americans can suffer under that conceptualization because the probability of seeking help can be seen as "weak." Her experience in undergrad and the communities she grew up in shaped the questions she would ask in her professional career and later in graduate school.

In her doctoral program at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Misra was interested in studying cultural dimensions of mental health, with an interest in interventions. There, she also co-founded a mental health club. As a public health educator before entering graduate school, Dr. Misra worked with organizations such as TeachAIDS in different capacities and felt stuck when health education wasn't enough, especially for communities who didn't have access to resources such as medical care and medication. She entered graduate school with bigger questions. In her discipline and doctoral program, Dr. Misra was trailblazing a field of research around mental health and Asian Americans that was largely absent. In her words, "I never had a mentor for the kind of scholar I wanted to be—the SF State critical scholarship and pedagogy kind of person." But she persisted. As a doctoral student, Dr. Misra sought out her place by using the resources available to her, creating a dissertation on social epidemiology, and finding a mentor outside of her program to learn qualitative methods. Her persistence and determination to craft a research agenda that reflected her world outlook and prioritized the communities she deemed important resonated with my experience in doctoral studies.

Settling into SF State

When we spoke about how her journey led her to the Department of Public Health at San Francisco State, Dr. Misra stated that she was not planning on being an academic. She applied for the position because it was listed as "critical" Public Health. She understood the radical history of SF State, but she was drawn by the critical

scholarship in her department and the critical pedagogy her colleagues exemplify. Reflecting on her journey and the position she holds, Dr. Misra recounts, "One of the MPH students I spoke to chose our program because we considered mental health as part of public health. That was me when I was applying for grad schools. Now, I'm the professor." In this realization that I share with Dr. Misra, it is powerful to know that the faculty at SF State can relate not only to our students' social identities and lived experiences but to the epistemological decisions we've made to study the topics and communities in our research program also speaks to the students who come from and want to serve the very same communities.

As we wrapped our conversations, we discussed what kinds of support faculty of color like Dr. Misra might need from SF State. She mentioned that opportunities like being a Health Equity Institute (HEI) fellow and a member of the Science Technology Studies (STS) Hub were meaningful experiences to "enhance [her] research interests and ask for advice from colleagues." Still, Dr. Misra believes that faculty of color at SF State need resources and equity to be successful scholars, educators, and citizens of our academic community. She insists that listening, trusting, respecting, and acknowledging people's successes are vital in fostering an environment where faculty of color can thrive. She also commented that it was important that our institution recognize that resources for students are essential, "education that is affordable and accessible for all young people in the state."

Lastly, I was moved by her answer when we talked about how Dr. Misra measures her success. Dr. Misra said, "I feel success if how I conduct myself aligns with my values." With examples of scholarly advancement, intellectual contributions, and pedagogical curiosity, Dr. Misra's penchant for acting with integrity in academic spaces gives me the hope that my colleagues at SF State are creating spaces for teaching and learning that spark ideas and ignite action.

Campus Connections

Transforming Campus Through Scholarship Hubs

by Laura Mamo

Thirty Faculty have been awarded fellowships in Research and Scholarship Hubs this academic year, joining over 100 campus hub alumni (<https://transforms.sfsu.edu/hubs>). SF State hosts three unique faculty-led hub efforts, each with distinct missions, histories, and leadership structures. The three hubs are NSF ADVANCE, Equity Hub, and the STS Hub. NSF Advance Hub is led by a grant award to “SF State Transforms” to provide a structure to advance faculty women in STEM through the promotion of equity in service and scholarship. The campus Equity Hub holds a campus-wide mission as a research hub to support the advancement of associate-ranked faculty who work at the intersection of racial and gender-focused scholarship. The science, technology, and society hub, or STS Hub, is the longest-running hub. STS hub aims to broaden research in the interdisciplinary field of STS by bringing together scholars in humanities and arts, social sciences, and STEM fields who work at the intersections of science/ technology/ medicine and social justice to develop collaboration. Research and Scholarship Hubs aim to create environments for faculty community, recognition, advancement, and leadership. Each hub relies on an annual cohort model and faculty leadership, often drawn from hub alums. Hubs meet monthly to implement their unique goals and missions.

The NSF ADVANCE Scholarship Hub

The ADVANCE Scholarship Hub was seeded in 2020 with funding from the National Science Foundation to implement a three-year effort, SF State Transforms, by the Co-PIs and Co-Investigator team: Dean Carmen Domingo (Co-PI), Laura Mamo (Co-PI), Diane Harris, Sally Pasion, Kai Burris, Nancy Gerber, and Colleen Hoff. Dawn Elissa-Fischer joined the team in 2022 following departures for retirement and institutional leadership by Hoff and Gerber.

The ADVANCE Scholarship Hub is one component of Transforms’ three integrated initiatives to address service and scholarship inequities that

disadvantage “underrepresented” and minoritized racialized and gendered faculty. The ADVANCE Hub is designed to advance faculty equity in STEM fields, focusing on intersectional axes of power and addressing racial and gender inequities in service and scholarship. Professor Diane Harris (PSYCH) and co-I on Transforms leads the ADVANCE scholars’ hub each year.

This third year of ADVANCE Hub welcomes eleven new and recently hired faculty into the hub model, bringing the number of faculty supported through ADVANCE hubs to thirty-two Faculty.

Congratulations to the Faculty awarded a 2023-24 ADVANCE Scholarship Hub Fellowship.

- Angelica Camacho, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice Studies (HSS)
- Ashmi Desai, Assistant Professor, Communications Studies (LCA)
- Eileen Gonzales, Assistant Professor, Physics & Astronomy (CoSE)
- Navi Kaur, Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice Studies (HSS)
- Alyssa Kubota, Assistant Professor, Computer Engineering (CoSE)
- Supriya Misra, Assistant Professor, Public Health (HSS)
- Juliana Parma, Assistant Professor, Kinesiology (HSS)
- Rochelle- Jan Reyes, Lecturer Faculty, Public Health (HSS)
- Shubhi Sachdeva, Assistant Professor, Child and Adolescent Development (HSS)
- Cathy Samayoa, Assistant Professor, Biology (CoSE)
- Qun Wang, Assistant Professor, Computer Science (CoSE)

The Equity Research Hub

The Equity Research Hub’s mission is to create an institutionally supported community of scholars engaging in peer discussion and review of research and scholarship, sharing and drawing from faculty strengths and wisdom, and ensuring accountability. Hub alumni developed the current equity hub. During the inaugural year of the NSF ADVANCE hub, Dawn-Elissa Fisher (ANTH) was a fellow in the ADVANCE hub and served as co-lead of the STS hub when Professor Julietta Hua (WGS) was a fellow

and lead of a reading group. Fisher, Hua, and Laura Mamo (PI of ADVANCE and Co-Founder of the STS Hub) recognized the need for a campus research hub that stretched beyond STEM fields and, importantly, focused on faculty centering racial and gender justice scholarship and by faculty women of color. Working with Faculty Affairs and ORSP, the Equity Research Hub was launched in 2021 to support scholars and scholarship centering on racial and gender equity. The Equity Research Hub has been institutionalized into Faculty Affairs with ORSP support.

The Equity Hub initiative provides a structure for faculty at the Associate level, a career stage poised for leadership yet where support and community can be limited, especially for Black, Indigenous, and/or women of color faculty. The 2023-2024 Equity Research Hub is led by Professor Kasturi Ray (WGS) and continues to be organized by Fischer (steering committee, past lead), Hua (steering committee, past lead), and Mamo (steering committee). Faculty Affairs and ORSP provide institutional support for this program.

Congratulations to the Faculty Awarded a 2023-24 Equity Hub Fellowship

- Fatima Alaoui- Communication Studies (LCA)
- Elif Balin- Counseling (HSS)
- Robert Keith Collins- American Indian Studies (CoES)
- Valerie Francisco-Menchavez- Sociology (HSS)
- Marcela Garcia-Castanon- Political Science (LCA)
- Veronica Rabelo- Management (LFCoB)
- Aritree Samanta- School of the Environment (CoSE)
- Sherria Taylor- Child & Adolescent Development (HSS) WW
- Dilara Yarbrough- Criminal Justice Studies (HSS)

The STS Hub: Science, Technology and Society

This year welcomes 20 new faculty and students into the STS hub, including two international scholars and two community scholars. This year is the inaugural year of a National Science

Foundation grant award to Professors Kenney (WGS), Mamo (PH), Lincoln (ANTH), and Hua (WGS) to create interdisciplinary student-faculty engagement and training in the interdisciplinary field of STS and its approach to ethics and justice.

The STS Hub serves as an early and successful model of a campus scholarship hub aimed at building interdisciplinary faculty engagement and research. STS Hub was seeded as part of the Health Equity Institute and its mission to invest in faculty research, knowledge, and community development to advance health equity and social justice aligned with SF State’s mission of social justice education. In 2015, HEI launched the Science, Justice, and Health Equity (SJHE) Research program and the STS Hub. The STS Hub was seeded by Laura Mamo, HEI faculty and STS scholar in the social sciences, Martha Kenney, Women and Gender Studies faculty and a humanities-focused feminist science studies scholar, and then HEI postdoctoral fellow Ugo Edu, anthropologist (now at UCLA). Mamo and Kenney continue to Co-Direct the STS Hub and its programs.

The STS hub aims to build upon an interdisciplinary field of research and engagement that examines the co-production of sciences, technologies, and society. It aims to promote and understand their ethical and justice impacts. The STS Hub fellowship program was launched in 2019, integrating new faculty co-leads and steering committee members



each year: Martha Lincoln (ANTH) co-led the hub in 2019-20 following a fellowship; Dawn-Elissa Fischer (ANTH) co-led in 2020-21 and Juliette Hua (WGS) continued her fellowship year as an STS reading-group leader, facilitating discussion around new and vital work in the field. The STS Hub products include new NSF grants awarded to SF State faculty, books, journal articles, conference presentations, and the development of community service and educational content, including new STS-inclusive course content.

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Congratulations to the 2023-24 STS Hub Fellow Recipients

- Archana Anand, Assistant Professor, Biology
- Takudzwa Chirenje, MSc Student, Biology
- Angela Fillingim, Assistant Professor, Sociology
- Dawn-Elissa Fischer, Professor, Anthropology
- Rachel Flynn, Assistant Professor, Child and Adolescent Development
- Sheldon Gen, Professor, PACE
- Salah Hamdoun, PhD Student, Arizona State University
- Arezoo Islami, Assistant Professor, Philosophy
- Martha Lincoln, Associate Professor, Anthropology
- Sonja Mackenzie, Associate Professor, Public Health, Santa Clara University
- Filipp Matveev, MA Student, Philosophy
- Supriya Misra, Assistant Professor, Public Health
- Sepideh Modrek, Associate Professor, Economics
- Liz Nevolo, MSc Student, SLHS
- Rae Shaw, Assistant Professor, School of Cinema
- Amy Skonieczny, Professor, International Relations
- Anusha Sundarajan, Assistant Professor, SLHS
- Theresa Willem, PhD Student, Technical University of Munich
- Claudia Wilopo, Visiting Scholar, Anthropology
- Lee Worden Specialist, Proctor Foundation, UCSF

Faculty Voices: How a Hub Model Can Support Faculty Development

by Luella Fu

Speaking as just one ADVANCE Hub 2022-2023 Fellow, I was drawn to the program's focus on service and peer support. It fits in perfectly with an ambitious service plan that I had no idea how to begin: inspired by the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development's (NCFDD) Faculty Support Program (often called its "boot camp") and conversations I had with other alumni of that boot camp, I was looking for a way to launch similar programming at SFSU, preferably with a group of career-development enthusiasts. The hub model provided a complementary program that not only got me moving in the direction I wanted but also provided support in realms I had overlooked.

One of those overlooked avenues of support was

how it organically led to not just the voicing of common concerns as they arose in our conversations but also the solidification of those concerns in a written list that was then something we could address together. Common concerns included tenure and promotion, potential research collaborations, how to ask for what we need, and how to fulfill multiple faculty demands.

I believe our hub's main mode of support was facilitating the conversations that allowed us to share experiences from a wide variety of disciplines and faculty at different stages in their careers. From our conversations, I gained strategies for the tenure process, for example, how to ask others in the research community about potential reviewers. Also, our conversations provided ideas about using promotion to find ways to get involved in new work or to secure other mentorship resources.

The hub model was a space for support and to develop new programs open to the wider SFSU community. One of the results from the previous year's hub was creating a bi-monthly facilitated writing group that gives accountability and a structured time to do research in the community. In our group, I co-developed a workshop to discuss and implement a "semester plan," one of the NCFDD boot camp strategies, that I hope to expand this year. Through a mentorship model or a series of office hours, I believe these kinds of programs can benefit from greater structural support from a hub model.

Finally, I really appreciated hearing other faculty discuss their "work-life balance" or their lives. Their struggles and experiences normalized my own and gave me perspective on challenges I do not currently experience, like training a newborn puppy or raising children. From this, I got the message that there were many ways to approach a faculty career. I also appreciated the feeling of communal support from our hub members, which was particularly salient when one of our hub fellows invited us all to her house for homemade pozole (delicious!). In all, the Hub affirmed us and our lives as faculty. We were seen and treated as complete humans with multifaceted lives. It was lovely to experience this at the university level, especially as it has been something I cherish within the Mathematics Department. For me, working with people I admire and like is very important, and happily, my fellowship hub expanded my appreciation for faculty across SFSU.

Gratitude

- Thank you to Jessica Adams-Grigorieff and Anoshua Chaudhuri for partnering and leading the CEETL-Transforms Faculty Writing Meet-ups.
- Thank you to faculty leaders of Scholarship Hubs – Professor Diane Harris, ADVANCE Hub; Professor Kasturi Ray, Equity Hub; and Professors Martha Kenney and Laura Mamo, STS Hub.
- Loretta Kelly and David Rebanal serve as our external and internal evaluators.
- We thank WISE for their continued partnership.

Join a Faculty Writing Meet-Up: Virtual or In-Person

SF State Transforms and the Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL) host weekly faculty writing meetups. Sessions provide dedicated time and structured accountability for faculty to advance their writing. Join us on the first and third Tuesday of each month, 1 – 3 p.m., and every second and fourth Friday, 1 – 3 p.m. Tuesday sessions are hybrid; join virtually or in person at the Learning and Teaching Commons in Library 286. Friday sessions are virtual if you are attending via Zoom, RSVP by scanning the QR code below or follow the link: https://sfsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1GO2VgIMJM5Uxgi. For more information, contact: transforms@sfsu.edu.

Upcoming Writing Meet-Up Session Dates:

- Tuesday, 11/7
- Friday, 11/10
- Tuesday, 11/21
- Tuesday, 12/05
- Friday, 12/08
- Tuesday, 12/19
- Friday, 12/22



ORSP Hires Grant Development Specialist

Thien Lam will work in ORSP as the Grant Development Specialist and can work with faculty on grant funding. We welcome Thien to the campus. If you have any grant-related questions, please reach out to ttlam@sfsu.edu.

Have a great autumn and holiday season!

SF State Transforms
Advancing Faculty Equity

