

## KELLY NIELSEN

University of California, Merced  
School of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts  
5200 North Lake Road  
Merced, CA 95343

[knielsen8@ucmerced.edu](mailto:knielsen8@ucmerced.edu)  
805-340-7353

### APPOINTMENTS

---

2016-2017 **University of California, Merced**  
Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Sociology

### EDUCATION

---

2016 **University of California, San Diego**  
Ph.D., Sociology  
Dissertation: "Educated People: Narratives of Ambition and Failure among Poor and Working-Class Young Adult Women in Community College"  
Committee: Amy J. Binder (chair), Isaac Martin, Akos Rona-Tas, Hugh Mehan, and Amanda Datnow

2011 **University of California, San Diego**  
M.A., Sociology  
Exams: Sociology of Education, Political Economy (with distinction)

2007 **University of California, Los Angeles**  
B.A., Latin American Studies  
*Magna Cum Laude*

### RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

---

Education, Culture, Social Psychology, Race/Ethnicity, Inequality, Qualitative Methods

### PUBLICATIONS

---

- Nielsen, Kelly.** 2015. "'Fake It 'Til You Make It': Why Community College Students' Aspirations 'Hold Steady.'" *Sociology of Education* 88(4):265-283.
- Interviewed in *The Society Pages*, "[The Value of a Community College Education: An Interview](#)," September 2015 (with Nicole Deterding).
- Nielsen, Kelly.** 2015. "Beyond 'Warming Up' and 'Cooling Out': The Effects of Community College on a Diverse Group of Disadvantaged Young Women." Pp. 111-133 in *Inequality, Power and School Success: Case Studies on Racial Disparity and Opportunity in Education*, edited by G. Conchas and M. Gottfried. New York: Routledge.
- Cerven, Christine, Vicki Park, Jennifer Nations, and **Kelly Nielsen.** 2013. *College Can Be Complicated: Low-Income Single Mothers' Experiences in Postsecondary Education*. Los Angeles: UC/ACCORD.

Park, Vicki, Christine Cerven, Jennifer Nations, and **Kelly Nielsen**. 2013. *What Matters for Community College Success? Assumptions and Realities Concerning Student Supports for Low-Income Women*. Los Angeles: UC/ACCORD.

- Nielsen, Kelly**, Aradhana Tiwari, David Pasquini, Lizette Solórzano, and May Wejebe. 2010. "The Family Dynamics of Tunkaseño Migration." Pp. 187-215 in *Mexican Migration and the U.S. Economic Crisis*, edited by Wayne A. Cornelius, David Fitzgerald, Pedro Lewin, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. La Jolla, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies.
- Featured in *The Huffington Post*, "Mexican Migration: A South of the Border View," May 2011

#### WORKING PAPERS

---

**Nielsen, Kelly**. "Failure in Young Adulthood: Narrative Agency in Career, Practice, and Care Institutions among Poor and Working-Class Women."

**Nielsen, Kelly**. "Longitudinal Qualitative Interviewing and Social Action."

**Nielsen, Kelly** and Amy Binder. "Entrepreneurship and the Contradictory College."

#### OTHER WRITING

---

**Nielsen, Kelly**. 2015. "[Schools on Film: Teaching Education between Realism and Representation](#)." Sociology of Education Section newsletter.

#### HONORS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

---

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 2016      | Emerging Diversity Scholar, National Center for Institutional Diversity, University of Michigan                  |
| 2015      | Barbara and Paul Saltman Distinguished Teaching Award for Graduate Students, University of California, San Diego |
| 2015      | Dissertation Writing Fellowship, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego                    |
| 2015      | Dean of Social Sciences Travel Fund Award, University of California, San Diego                                   |
| 2013-2014 | University of California All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity (UC/ACCORD) Dissertation Fellowship     |
| 2013      | Summer Graduate Teaching Scholar, University of California, San Diego  |

#### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

---

- 2016 “Failure in Emerging Adulthood: Narrative Agency in Career and Practice Institutions among Poor and Working-Class Women.” Regular Session, American Sociological Association, Seattle, WA, August.
- 2015 “Virtuous Ambition: Why Community College Students’ Aspirations Hold Steady.” Colloquium Speaker Series, UCSD Department of Sociology, October.
- “Fake It ‘Til You Make It: Why Community College Students’ Aspirations Hold Steady.” Regular Session, American Sociological Association, Chicago, IL, August.
- “Beyond ‘Warming Up’ and ‘Cooling Out.’” Graduate Student Conference, UCSD Department of Sociology, May.
- “Imagined Trajectories and Moral Worth.” Sociology of Education Association, Asilomar, CA, February.
- 2014 “Reimagining the Community College.” UC/ACCORD, Lake Arrowhead, CA, November.
- “Therapeutic Past and Moral Futures: Narratives and the Management of Mobility.” American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, August.
- “Narrative and Dream Deferral.” Graduate Student Conference, UCSD Department of Sociology, May.
- 2013 “Community College as Narrative Space.” UC/ACCORD, Lake Arrowhead, CA, November.
- 2012 “‘I Always Wanted to Go Into Nursing Ever Since I Started Working in the Medical Field’: The Cultural Elements of Occupation Choice” (with Jennifer Nations). American Sociological Association, Denver, CO, August.
- “The Substance of Goals and Student Behaviors” (with Jennifer Nations). Sociology Department Inequalities Workshop, UC San Diego, May.
- “Work Goals and Academic Decision Making among Low-Income Women in Higher Education” (with Jennifer Nations). Pacific Sociological Association, San Diego, CA, March.
- “Work Goals and Academic Decision Making among Low-Income Women in Higher Education” (with Jennifer Nations). Sociology of Education Association, Asilomar, CA, February.
- 2011 “Low-Income Single Mothers’ Experiences with Postsecondary Education” (with Vick Park, Christine Cerven, Jennifer Nations, and Sana Meghani). American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April.

- 2010 “Entering the Field: Research Design and Pathways to Postsecondary Education.”  
Graduate Student Conference, UCSD Department of Sociology, April.
- 2009 “Every Migrant Comes from Someone: The Family Dynamics of Tunkaseño Migration”  
(with Aradhana Tiwari, David Pasquini, and Lizette Solórzano). Graduate Student  
Conference, UCSD Department of Sociology, April.

#### TEACHING

---

- 2013-2016 Instructor, Sociology 117: Language, Culture, and Education
- 2011-2016 Teaching Assistant, Sociology 117: Language, Culture, and Education
- 2012-2013 Teaching Assistant, Sociology 126: The Social Organization of Education
- 2011 Teaching Assistant, Urban Studies and Planning 2: Urban World Systems

#### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

- 2015-2016 Research Consultant, The Students We Share: A Cross-Border Workforce  
Development Priority, UC San Diego Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies
- 2009-2013 Graduate Student Researcher, UC/ACCORD Pathways to Postsecondary Success,  
Principal Investigators Professor Amanda Datnow (UCSD) and Professor Daniel  
Solórzano (UCLA)

#### INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

---

- 2014-2015 Graduate Student Mentor, Mentorship Program for Early-Stage Sociology  
Graduate Students, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego
- 2014 Teaching Assistant Consultant, Center for Teaching Development, University of  
California, San Diego
- 2011-2012 Graduate Student Representative, Diversity Committee, Department of Sociology,  
University of California, San Diego
- 2009-2010 Graduate Student Conference Coordinating Committee, Department of Sociology,  
University of California, San Diego

#### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIPS

---

Reviewer: *American Sociological Review*, *Sociology of Education*, *Qualitative Sociology*,  
*Emerging Adulthood*

Member: American Sociological Association, Sociology of Education Association