

Oliver Nell

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EDUCATION

- Master of Science, Rural Sociology** May 2025
Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama
- Master of Arts, Arts Administration** May 2023
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
- Bachelor of Arts, English: Professional and Public Writing** May 2020
Bachelor of Arts, Music: Classical Guitar
Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama

FELLOWSHIPS

- National Science Foundation Research Trainee in Climate Resiliency (NRT)** August 2023 – May 2025
Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Climate change impacts on rural communities
- Social and cultural stigmas surrounding climate change conversations in rural communities
- Opportunities unique to rural areas for combatting climate change issues
- The role of social networks in effecting greater sustainability in rural and marginalized communities
- Local systems as a solution for greater environmental, economic, and social sustainability

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Research Assistant** August 2023 – Current
The Future of Farming: Increasing Adoption of Conservation Practices among Alabama Row Crop Farmers
Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama
- Working with a diverse team of academic researchers, Alabama Cooperative Extension agents, farmers, and others
 - Collecting detailed data regarding the barriers and opportunities that exist in conservation agriculture within Alabama
 - Studying the interactions between the various stakeholders on the project to better understand the discourse surrounding topics like climate change, conservation agriculture, etc.
 - Developing practical, actionable research to lessen the negative environmental impacts of agriculture in Alabama, while improving the overall economic wellbeing of the agriculture industry

- Program Coordinator** September 2021 – July 2023
Indiana University Prison Arts Initiative (IUPAI), Bloomington, Indiana
- Created the first IU-affiliated prison education program from the ground up as an initiative of the IU Arts & Humanities Council and the IU Center for Rural Engagement
 - Coordinate a team of three instructors, a program manager, and multiple other contract workers in administering a semester-long art class in Putnamville Correctional Facility, Putnam, IN
 - Develop initial necessary program infrastructure through campus, community, and DOC buy-in
 - Expand the scope of the program by engaging in deeper conversations with the university and the DOC about the importance of university involvement in prison education efforts
 - Produce necessary documentation and build necessary partnerships to ensure program sustainability and growth
 - Apply for and manage funding used to support the program
 - Plan and coordinate prison education-related events to build engagement on campus and in the surrounding community

Researcher and Writer

July 2023

Network for Culture & Arts Policy (NCAP), Brooklyn, New York (Hybrid)

- Studied equity across SDC's membership and the theater industry as a whole
- Reviewed literature focusing on demographic equity and diversity, the efficacy of advanced degrees and other professional development opportunities in the field, and the general feasibility of a career in theater
- Contributed research toward the continuation of SDC's 2020 "On the Edge" Report (<https://sdcweb.org/next-stage-report>)

Research Project Coordinator

June 2022 – June 2023

Network for Culture & Arts Policy (NCAP), Brooklyn, New York (Hybrid)

- Assisted in the development and writing of a city-wide cultural plan for Fresno, CA, focusing on how to utilize city funding toward deepening arts and cultural engagement in the education system, supporting local arts and cultural organizations, creating job opportunities for local artists, and more
- Assisted in the coordination of a 10-person, fully-remote research team—members of which focus in multiple different areas: management, communication, research, data collection/analysis, writing, and copyediting
- Assisted in conducting detailed forms of quantitative and qualitative cultural research, including publications (articles, books, reports, etc.), surveys, focus interviews, and in-person community meetings

Intern Contractor

May – Dec. 2022

Americans for the Arts (AFTA), Washington, D.C. (Hybrid)

- Conducted qualitative research on arts and business partnerships in various rural communities—focusing primarily on Oxford, MS, in which I conducted in-person interviews and site visits
- Interpreted complex community dynamics into replicable, solution-based information about how communities can best leverage their creative economies and integrate them into broader civic and economic efforts
- Developed findings into Part 3 of AFTA’s *How to Partner with Your Chamber of Commerce* series—especially in a case-study on Oxford, MS

GRADUATE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

South Arts, Atlanta, Georgia (Remote)

Spring 2022

- Edited and revised grant guidelines and application documents
- Contributed to developing a new grant program and its documentation

Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design, Washington D.C. (Remote)

Spring 2022

- Developed presentation for and presented at Silicon Vistal’s Rural Design Days 2022
- Documented various CIRDP projects, events, and community workshops

Traditional Arts Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana

Spring 2022

- Aided in management of Rotating Exhibition Network, a network of libraries in rural Indiana which alternate hosting various Indiana history or arts-related exhibitions
- Developed supplementary programming opportunities for REN participants, such as concerts, speaking engagements, and crafting workshops

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Grant Review Panelist, *South Arts, Atlanta, GA*

Spring 2022

Committee Member, *IU Strategic Plan 2030, Service to Our State and Beyond*
State Partnerships for Rural and Underserved Regions Subcommittee

Fall 2022 – Spring 2023

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Nell, O. & Doering, A., “Indiana University Prison Arts Initiative.” Presenter at Education for All: Opening the Doors to Higher Education for Justice-Involved Individuals in Indiana, Indianapolis, IN (December 2022).

Nell, O. Organizer and Moderator for the Indiana University Prison Arts Initiative Workshop Series, Virtual (April – June 2022).

Nell, O. & Sugg, S., “Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design.” Presenter at Silicon Vistal’s Rural Design Days 2022, Virtual (March 2022).

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

- *Rural Sociology*, Dr. Ryan Thomson
- *Sociology: Global Perspective*, Dr. Carl Backman
- *Global Geography*, Dr. Adam Payne
- *Theory and Methodology of Qualitative Research*, Dr. Cary Andrzejewski
- *Fundamentals of Sustainable Agriculture*, Dr. James Farmer
- *Seminar in Rural and Grassroots Arts*, Prof. Adrian Starnes
- *Natural Hazard Risk and Disaster Resilience*, Dr. Chris Burton
- *Technical and Professional Editing*, Dr. Susan Youngblood
- *Cultural Planning and Urban Development*, Dr. Doug Noonan
- *Fund Development for Non-Profit Organizations*, Prof. Karen Gahl-Mills

REFERENCES

Name: Karen Gahl-Mills
Title: Director of Arts Administration Programs
Department: O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs
Organization: Indiana University
Phone Number: (912) 438-6642
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Name: Adrian Starnes
Title: Associate Director
Organization: Indiana University Arts & Humanities Council
Phone Number: (812) 650-2923
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Name: Tony Cleasby
Title: Principal Consultant & Lead Project Manager
Organization: Network for Culture & Arts Policy
Phone Number: (267) 978-9079
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