

## DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

### Sharon Sampson



Sharon Sampson was born in Los Angeles, California, but spent her formative years in Belize, Central America. As the byproduct of South Central Los Angeles and all it encompasses, she recognizes the complexity of her social position. Raised by an immigrant, single parent in this country, she was thrust into roles to acquire information for her family since she had the status of being a US-born citizen. While marred with challenges, her formative years allowed for dreams of a better life with the positive influences of many.

She attended Holy Cross Middle School and Bishop Conaty High School. Since she excelled in Math and Science and graduated with a gold seal on her diploma, she was encouraged to apply to the Biomedical program at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). She was taught that education was the ticket to social mobility. This seemed to be a natural progression as her brother was able to transfer from Los Angeles City College directly into UC San Francisco's Medical School. Due to the continued academic challenges, the alternative was to withdraw from UCR and follow suit with the rest of the young women into a Nursing Program. She chose a different path due to the supportive mentorship of the faculty of color at UCR, such as Dr. Aldaberto Aguirre. She relied on community support to guide her through educational environments and viewed this sense of community as an essential aspect of her identity. After graduating from UCR majoring in Psychology and Sociology, she earned her Master's Degree from Cal State, Los Angeles. While the commute from Riverside to Los Angeles four nights per week was

grueling, she understood by then that being in a supportive academic environment was vital to her success as representation mattered.

After completing a Master's Degree program, she worked as a Juvenile Probation Officer for the County of Riverside, then later as a United States Probation Officer for a combined experience of 23 years. During her career as an officer, she also taught as an adjunct faculty for approximately 12 years before fully transitioning to a full-time faculty at Grossmont College. As a full-time Administration of Justice Faculty, she actively engages in initiatives to reduce the opportunity gaps for Grossmont scholars, especially those marginalized and underserved. She served as the AOJ Internship Coordinator and ACJA Club Advisor. She is committed to developing pathways to education and enhancing educational and employment outcomes. Her passion for teaching has provided her with a unique skill set that is critical for continuing to change the academic trajectory of so many underrepresented students. She is an Academic Senate officer and participates on the Curriculum Committee and the Regional Oversight Committee. She is a Professional Development Co-Coordinator and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Site Lead. Past committee work includes Student Success and Equity Committee, ASCCC Policy and Procedure, and CTE Committees. She has co-facilitated ASCCC webinars on Credit for Prior Learning, Anti-Racism initiatives, and Strong Workforce CTE Employment Trends Data. She has authored and co-authored several ASCCC and GC Academic Senate Resolutions. Her active involvement in various committees and task force is to support the success and retention of the students at Grossmont.

She is pursuing her EdD in Organizational Change Leadership from the University of Southern California (USC). This is familiar territory as she was raised near USC's campus. She feels she stands on the shoulders of many women of color who sacrificed by remaining in the struggle to clear a narrow path for her existence and survival. She was raised with the "If not you, then who else" mantra heavily influenced her disposition and resiliency. She is committed to transformative justice. Like many before her, she is firmly committed to being a changer-maker to clear the pathways for those just beginning their journey. As a scholar-practitioner, she plans to remain on this journey for the long haul.

A major thanks to all who have shared in her journey!

For every door that's been opened to me, I've tried to open my door to others. And here is what I have to say, finally: Let's invite one another in."  
— Michelle Obama

## Tara Venn



In 2012, Tara began her “second career” at Grossmont teaching in the Administration of Justice program. Currently, she is co-instructor for AOJ 218 Crime Scene Technology during the fall semester and teaches AOJ 252 Advanced Forensic Photography during the spring semester. She finds teaching at the college level very rewarding. She is forever grateful to those in the field who gave her a chance and she sees instructing future forensic colleagues as her way of giving back. Tara believes the instructors at Grossmont and within the AOJ program are the best and the proof is evident in how many graduates are successfully representing our school across the country. Tara tells her students that to be successful in the field of forensic science one needs to have the desire to do the absolute best job each time. You only have one chance to process the crime scene whether it be a burglary or a death investigation. The victim and the overall community represented deserve nothing less!

Tara Venn was born in Michigan and raised in western North Carolina. Tara attended undergraduate schooling at East Carolina University on a full volleyball scholarship as a middle blocker from 1992 to 1996. One of Tara’s greatest accomplishments was finishing 11th in the 1995 NCAA Division I rankings for block average per game. After receiving her degree in criminal justice, Tara moved to San Diego for graduate school and in 1999 she began her career in the criminal justice field with the Chula Vista Police Department as a volunteer in the Crime Laboratory. After short stints as a Peace Officer and Police Services Officer with the department, Tara was transferred to the Crime Laboratory in 2008 as a Forensic Specialist. Tara has been in the laboratory ever since and loves every day in the Police Department. Being in the crime laboratory is so very rewarding by giving a voice to victims through proper documentation of crime scenes and collection of evidence. Every day is a chance for new possibilities and challenges. Tara could be in the office working on reports, or processing evidence in the examination room, and in the next couple of hours working a homicide scene or testifying in court.

Tara is an active member of the California State Division of the International Association for Identification and the Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers. She has served on the executive board as a director of the south for the CSDIAI association.