

## The Spotlight is on Dr. William Canak

I came to MTSU in 1994, thirteen years after receiving Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In those years my career took me from an NIMH post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University to faculty positions at Brown University, Tulane University and Loyola University. My early research and teaching largely focused on economic and political development in Latin America. I was a Fulbright Fellow (Argentina, 1988) and have served as Contributing Editor to the Library of Congress' *Handbook of Latin American Studies* since 1981. My Latin America focused research has been published in numerous professional journals, including the *Latin American Research Review* and two books, *Lost Promises* (Westview Press, 1989) and *Modern Mexico* (McGraw-Hill, 1998). In the late 1980s I began research in the field of labor law and industrial relations includes numerous articles in professional journals such as the *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, the *Journal of Collective Negotiations in the Public Sector* and *Political Power & Social Theory*. My commitment to relevant applied work led me in 1998 to found the *Tennessee Employment Relations Research Association* and I have served as Associate Director of the Tennessee Center for Labor-Management Relations. My consulting practice addresses a range of workplace, organizational and industrial relations research and training concerns. Since 2006 I have served on the Executive Board of the *Labor & Employment Relations Association* and in 2011 I was invited to become a contributing scholar at the Employment Policy Research Network ([www.employmentpolicy.org](http://www.employmentpolicy.org))

My recent research has focused on state wage & hours laws, employment practices that violate those laws and the fiscal impact on state revenues. My work frequently engages graduate students; I co-authored *Modern Mexico* with MTSU graduate student Laura Swanson and include students on my applied research projects. My most recent research estimates the extent of "unreported workers" (people paid off-the-books) and the lost taxes, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation premiums. My presentation to a Tennessee legislative committee in 2010 led to a 2011 state Task Force investigating these practices. My work also led to an invitation to address a Columbia University Law School (August 2011) roundtable of State Attorneys General on wage fraud and enforcement of state wage and hour laws. Former MTSU students were part of that research project. I view Sociology as a very practical discipline that contributes to our community's capacity to address important challenges and opportunities.

