

Justin Denney named William Julius Wilson Distinguished Professor of Sociology

In August, the Department of Sociology welcomed Justin Denney, the new William Julius Wilson Distinguished Professor of Sociology at WSU. Denney's research focuses on understanding how the characteristics of families and communities shape health outcomes for individuals and health disparities across groups. His work has addressed a wide range of health and wellbeing outcomes, ranging from adult suicide mortality to child asthma and food insecurity.

Prior to coming to WSU, Denney was an associate professor at Rice University, where he also served as director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research's Urban Health Program.

He has more than 25 peer-reviewed articles in journals such as *Social Science & Medicine*, *Social Science Research*, and *Demography*. Denney's research has also been supported by the Health Disparities Scholar Program at the National Institutes for Health, the Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, and the Foundation for Child Development.

Denney will contribute greatly to our graduate and undergraduate programs. His experience at Rice included the creation of interdisciplinary and multi-institutional



collaborations with medical researchers, and he hopes to create similar opportunities for students at WSU interested in the sociology of health and illness through the University's initiatives on health equity.

The William Julius Wilson Distinguished Professor position is named in honor of Wilson, a prominent sociologist, WSU alumnus, author, and professor of sociology at Harvard University.

