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Marshall University professor named conference chair for 51st Annual Meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society

By TAYLOR POLING
THE PARTHENON

Marshall University professor Brian Hoey has been named the conference chair and proceedings editor for the 51st Annual Meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society.

The three-day event, which is scheduled for April, will be in Huntington at the Big Sandy Conference Center.

This year's conference theme is "Reinventing and Reinvesting in the Local for Our Common Good."

Hoey is an associate professor of anthropology and director of undergraduate education in the department of sociology and anthropology at Marshall University.

Anthropology is defined as the study of humans, and takes knowledge from social and biological sciences, humanities and physical sciences to answer questions about human life.

Hoey describes anthropology as "what you think it is and also what you don't know it is."

"I think when most people think of anthropology, they think of archaeology, which is the 'Tomb Raider,' 'Indiana Jones' kind of romanticized view of archaeology," Hoey said.

Anthropology consists of four fields; archaeology, biological, linguistic and cultural anthropology.

Hoey is categorized as a cultural anthropologist.

Hoey's book "Opting for Elsewhere: Lifestyle Migration in the American Middle Class" was published in 2014 and provides an example of cultural anthropology for its readers. The research presented in his book is one example of what will be presented at the annual society meeting.

The meeting's slogan, "Connect. Exchange. Impact", held personal significance to Hoey. Impact was a key concept Hoey said helped him come to Marshall.

"I wouldn't have seen myself here. I'm not saying I didn't have other options, but in the end, all things considered, I found Marshall and the community of Huntington to be a place that offered real opportunity for me to do the work that I enjoy to do," Hoey said. "You go where you think you'll have the greatest impact."

Hoey, who is in his ninth year with the university, said he is excited to be organizing the meeting. Hoey will open an internship in the spring to assist in the management and organization of the event.

Hoey considers himself a serious researcher. Hoey said he takes pleasure in doing research and having that research published. Completing research was what Hoey was trained to do when he was working

on his doctorate.

Hoey uses research he personally works on outside of university to tie in with his classes. Hoey said he believes in having an active research agenda. The annual meeting will be a new and unique path for Hoey to use during his classes in the spring.

Although the theme for the event revolves around reinvention, the reinventing and reinvesting is not limited to a local scale.

"We live in a world which is intensely globalized," Hoey said. "People talk about internationalizing the curriculum and bringing it into a more critical focus with interdisciplinary approaches. Anthropology has been doing that for 150 years. We are the original interdisciplinary, intercultural, international focus. We can do this better than anyone."

The annual meeting is accepting proposals for organized sessions, forums and special events, as well as individually volunteered papers and posters that can blend anthropological and interdisciplinary interpretations as well as serve as a record of change while building more concrete futures.

"The 21st century anthropology is more relevant than it's ever been," Hoey said.

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PHOTO VIA BRIANHOEY.COM

Marshall University Brian Hoey published his book titled "Opting for Elsewhere: Lifestyle Migration in the American Middle Class" in 2014. Hoey will be the conference chair for the 51st Annual Meeting of the Southern Anthropological Society.