GINA E. TILLIS, Ph.D.

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RESEARCH PROFILE

- Over 15 years of UX/CX research experience, program evaluation, product/program management.
- Deep understanding of UX design theory for visually impactful interfaces and meaningful experiences.
- Led UX research on artificial intelligence in a shifting regulatory landscape for ethically responsible AI products.
- Proven ability to plan, design, and lead end-to-end formative, foundational, and evaluative research studies.
- Proficient in conducting rapid iterative testing and delivering high-quality, quick turnaround research reports.
- Exceptional communication with cross-functional teams, including product managers, designers, and marketers.
- Secured over $1,800,000 in social-behavioral research awards and data-informed program development grants.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Senior UX Researcher | CrowdStrike Holdings, Inc | Jan. 2023 - Oct. 2023
- o Conducted UX research for projects involving cutting-edge AI technologies, ensuring alignment with industry trends, user expectations and concerns, and ethically responsible product design.
- o Demonstrated expertise in comprehending artificial intelligence market dynamics, staying abreast of industry trends, customer behavior, and changes impacting business competitiveness.
- o Applied advanced research techniques to collect, analyze, and interpret business information about competitors, providing actionable insights for strategic decision-making in a competitive market.
- o Triangulated UX research with data analytics to inform the design direction and product principles.
- o Translated research findings into actionable insights, leading to a reduction in product development time and an increase in customer retention.

Professor | The University of Memphis | Aug. 2019 - Jan. 2023
- o Principal investigator for research portfolios using various methodologies across academic disciplines.
- o Collaborated with co-investigators and program practitioners to democratically develop research designs.
- o Managed multiple concurrent data sets: protected, organized, cleaned, prepared, coded, and thematize data.
- o Synthesized data to draft findings, recommendations, reports, and publications for diverse stakeholders.
- o Presented and published research at national conferences and in peer-reviewed journals and books.
- o Awarded research grants from Library of Congress, Spencer Foundation, and the University of Memphis.

Research Fellow & Research Assistantship | The University of Texas at Austin | Aug. 2016 - May 2019
- o Principal investigator for studies that included multiple methodologies across academic disciplines.
- o Conducted quasi-experimental research designs for evaluating treatment on retention.
- o Conducted quantitative (survey) and qualitative (ethnographic, participatory-action, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups) research designs to generate insight on perspectives and practices.
- o Conducted discourse and document analysis of educational policy, programming, curriculum, and instruction.
- o Presented and published research at national conferences and in peer-reviewed journals and books.
- o Awarded Teresa Lozano-Long research fellowship (twice) and UNCF Career Pathways faculty research grant.

Research Analyst I | National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development | Aug. 2018 - Aug. 2019
- o Collaborated with stakeholders (program administrators and practitioners) to identify and prioritize faculty professional development (PD) needs and services in the fast-changing field of higher education.
- o Developed research designs for program evaluation data collection and analysis.
- o Facilitated focus groups and in-depth interviews, and contextual inquiries.
- o Managed multiple concurrent data sets, yielding multiple research projects on PD effectiveness.
- o Composed research reports for the administrative team to improve customer services.

Adj. Professor Social Research Methods and Sociology | Huston-Tillotson University | Aug. 2016 - May 2019
- o Facilitated lessons on how to conduct social and behavioral research (quasi-experimental design, survey, usability studies, interviews, focus groups, contextual inquiry, ethnography, and participatory action) designs.
- o Designed qualitative and quantitative research projects for sociology, psychology, computer science students.
- o Facilitated lessons on improving the validity and reliability of research designs using data triangulation and communicating findings to stakeholders within and beyond the academy.
- o Developed research project evaluation metrics to evaluate the research competency of students.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT & CX RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Coordinator, First-Year Experience | Huston-Tillotson University | Aug. 2013 - Aug. 2016
- o Managed a team of 20-25 staff members and reduced employee turnover by 15%.
- o Implemented systemic support for employees to develop their skills and reach their full potential.
- o Led the execution of comprehensive internal quantitative, qualitative, and quasi-experimental assessments, gauging the program experience's influence customer (first-year students) retention.
- o Implemented data-informed academic interventions to increase the retention rate by 12%.
- o Cultivated business partnerships boosting external funding support by 23% for student scholarships.
- o Garnered over $1.4 million in development grants from UNCF Career Pathways and St. David's Foundation.

Associate Director, Student Leadership | Tidewater Community College | Oct. 2011 - Jan. 2013
- o Revitalized leadership development programs, contributing to a 20% increase in students reporting improved student life engagement and leadership skills in post-program assessments.
- o Developed a cohort of student leaders, leading to a 17 % increase in successful event execution.
- o Implemented a community outreach program resulting in a 20% rise in engagement with local non-profits.
- o Spearheaded initiatives that fostered cross-disciplinary collaboration, leading to a 15% growth in students participating in interdisciplinary projects.

RESEARCH METHODS & SOFTWARE FLUENCY

Discovery Concept Testing, Contextual Inquiry/Ethnography, Competitive Analysis, Literature Review/ Trends Analysis, Diary Studies, In-depth Interviews (remote & in-person), Personas, Journey Mapping, Focus Groups, Survey

Evaluative Rapid Iterative Testing (RITE) with low and high-fidelity prototypes, A/B Testing and Quasi-Experimental Evaluative Testing, Accessibility Testing, Tree-testing, Cognitive Walkthroughs, Survey

Architecture Card sorting, Discourse Analysis

Software UserZoom, Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, NVivo, DeDoose, EnjoyHQ, SPSS, Figma, Miro, R, Azure, SQL, Microsoft Power BI, Amplitude, Tableau

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Ph.D.	Cultural Studies in Education	University of Texas at Austin.	May 2020
M.A.	Sociological Practice	California State University, San Marcos	ABT 2010
M.A.	Teaching Social Studies	Grambling State University	July 2005
B.A.	History, minor Sociology	Grambling State University	Dec 2002
Certificate	User Experience Research & Prototyping	University of California, San Diego, Coursera	Aug 2022
Certificate	Data Analytics (SQL & Power BI)	Tech901	Apr 2024
Certificate	Advance Your Skills as a UX Researcher	LinkedIn Learning	In Progress

Portfolio www.ginatillis.com
LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/in/gina-tillis-ph-d-55b1049b/