



Join us for our March meeting of the

Cook County Commission on Social Innovation

March 9th, 2023 | 4 PM -118 N Clark St.
[County Board Room] & Facebook Live-

FEATURING



Desmond Upton Patton

Brian and Randi
Schwartz University
Professor and the thirty-
first Penn Integrates
Knowledge University
Professor

Desmond Upton Patton is the Brian and Randi Schwartz University Professor and the thirty-first Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor. He has joint appointments in the School of Social Policy & Practice and the Annenberg School for Communication along with a secondary appointment in the department of psychiatry in the Perelman School of Medicine.

Professor Patton's groundbreaking research into the relationship between social media and gang violence – specifically how communities constructed online can influence often harmful behavior offline – has led to his becoming the most cited and recognized scholar in this increasingly important area of social science. His early work attempting to detect trauma and preempt violence on social media led to his current roles as an expert on language analysis and bias in AI and a member of Twitter's Academic Research advisory board and Spotify's Safety Advisory Council. As a social worker, Patton realized existing gold standard data science techniques could not accurately understand key cultural nuances in language amongst predominantly black and Hispanic youth. In response, he created the Contextual Analysis of Social Media (CASM) approach to center and privilege culture, context and inclusion in machine learning and computer vision analysis. CASM can be applied by businesses and other organizations to observe social media and workplace communication channels for potentially incendiary language, which taken out of context can lead to violence. In 2018, Professor Patton published a groundbreaking finding in the prestigious *Nature* journal, *Digital Medicine*, which uncovered grief as a pathway to aggressive communication on Twitter. The report was cited in an *amicus curiae* brief submitted to the United States Supreme Court in *Elonis v. United States*, which examined the interpretation of threats on social media. Widely referenced across disciplines, Patton's research at the intersections of social media, AI, empathy and race has been mentioned in the *New York Times*, *Nature*, *Washington Post*, *NPR*, *Vice News*, *ABC News* and other prestigious media outlets. Before joining Penn, Patton was Professor of Social Work and Sociology at Columbia University, Senior Associate Dean at Columbia School of Social Work and Associate Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Data Science Institute at Columbia.