

Accomplished academic leader with deep expertise in strategic planning, curriculum design, collaborative organizational leadership, strategic budgeting, engagement of stakeholders and donors. Ecologist, creative writer, field station director, and educator with publications in science, fiction, nonfiction, and pedagogy. Bicultural Latinx, extensive international experience, native English speaker, fluent in Spanish and Danish. [As profiled on Utah PBS.](#)

Higher education should inspire students to use their individual imaginations and collective intelligences for self and society. Students find their way in life, see their place and value among disparate beliefs and thoughts. *Knowing* what others know. *Valuing* what others bring. *Doing* what is only possible with others. Higher education is more than the first step toward a job; it is about developing personal meaning for the kind of life one will lead and building capacities to use one's talents for the common good.

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	University of Utah, Department of Biology, Salt Lake City, Utah	1998
B.A.	Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana	1992
HERS	Certificate: Women Leaders in Higher Education	2016

EXPERIENCE

Presidential Honors Professor, Honors College, University of Utah 2023-2024

- Sabbatical: working on connected novellas across three generations of my Argentine-USA family as they relate to national identity, culture, and southern right whales.

Dean of the Honors College, University of Utah January 2012-May 2023

- Led liberal arts and sciences college of 2200 students within a research 1 university.
- Through dedicated strategic planning, achieved ambitious goals, including:
 - Grew staff from 5.5 to 17, faculty from 6 to 15.
 - Raised annual operating budget from 2.1M to 4.3M.
 - 150% increase in honors degree completion.
 - Increased diversity of student body from 15%-30%.
 - Tripled number of out of state students from 11%-30%.
 - Created office to mentor for nationally competitive scholarships resulting in 1 Rhodes, 4 Churchill, numerous Fulbright, Udall, Gilman, and Boren awards.
 - Mentored student body for enhanced role in shared governance.
 - Promoted faculty agency and decision-making through changes to policy.
- Initiated vision for globally oriented, integrated curricula in ecology, health, and human rights.
- Developed and taught Integrated Minor: [Ecology & Legacy](#)
- Elevated National Honors Advancement Board
 - Raised approximately \$14M for programs and scholarships.
- Contributed to national conversation on education through publications, presentations, committee work and conferences, excerpts here:

- *Salt Lake Tribune*. "[To Become Strong Citizens Students need to Combine Theory with Action](#)".
- Radio interview: sex, gender, and nature for a community [crowd-sourced course](#).
- Op-Ed Response [Inside Higher Education](#) on need for and value of liberal arts education.
- [Holistic Education Review](#), 30-year response to Dr. David Orr's "What is Education For?" (published with 3 students).
- Torti interview by Honors student: <https://www.honors.utah.edu/2019/11/05/dean-sylvia-torti-resident-renaissance-woman/>.

Associate Director, [Mapping Meaning](#)

2012-2018

- Supported founder to develop and implement workshops for women scientists, artists, and humanities scholars in diverse, remote field locations.

Director, Bonderman Field Station, University of Utah

2009-2011

- Developed and implemented a creative vision for a nascent field station to serve natural sciences, arts, humanities, architecture, and engineering faculty and students.
- Led strategic planning, including infrastructure development for facilities, potable water, land management, data collection/curation, as well as coordination of research, education, outreach, and job training programs.
- Secured donor funds and oversaw building of off-grid sustainable bathroom and 'safari' camping.
- Obtained BLM funding for research and education initiatives.
- Built strong community relations with Moab's mayor, economic director, BLM office, National Parks Service and Moab High School.
- Maintained national and international relationships with field station leaders and continue to provide occasional expert reviews.

Inaugural Sustainability Consultant, Rowland Hall St. Marks, Private K-12 School

2008

- Coordinated energy assessment for buildings associated with school.
- Recruited working parent committee and developed a strategic plan.

President and Vice-President, Writers at Work

2003-2006

- Worked with volunteer board to oversee a national writing conference; responsible for budget, contracts, fundraising, and logistics.

Plant Conservation Biologist, Red Butte Garden

2001-2003

- Inaugural conservation biologist for Garden, developed strategic plan to prioritize research and conservation for endangered Utah plant species.
- Built relationships and received contracts and grants from US Forest Service and BLM.

30-year publication record including pedagogy, ecology, creative writing

- PhD work in Ituri Forest, Democratic Republic of Congo, Darién of Panama, and Chiapas, Mexico resulted in scientific publications and novel, *The Scorpion's Tail* about the Zapatista Uprising of 1994, which won the Miguel Mármol Award for best debut Latina fiction (Curbstone Press, 2005).

- Research on birdsong production with Dr. Franz Goller resulted in the novel, *Cages*, and won the Nicholas Schaffner Award for Music in Literature (Schaffner Press, 2017).

PUBLICATIONS: PEDAGOGY

- 2022 Hart, I., K. E. Tennant, A. Torti Feener, and S.D. Torti. "[Empowering Students through a 'Certain Kind' Education: thirty years on: an updated response to David Orr's What is Education For?](#)" *Holistic Education* (2).
- 2016 Torti, S.D. and M. Bradley-Evans. "[Praxis Labs: Theory + Action as a Foundation of a Modern Honors Education](#)" in *Honors Education in Transition, Volume 2 Continuity and Innovation in Honors College Curricula*, Rob Glover and Katharine O'Flaherty, Editors. Rowman and Littlefield.

PUBLICATIONS: OP-ED

- 2020 Pasupathi, M. and S.D. Torti. "[Yes, and! to Delbanco and Peede.](#)" *Inside Higher Ed*, October 1
- 2015 Torti, S.D. "[To Become Strong Citizens Students Must Combine Theory with Action.](#)" *Salt Lake City Tribune*.

PUBLICATIONS: LITERARY

NOVELS

- 2017 *Cages*, Schaffner Press, Tucson, AZ
- 2005 *The Scorpion's Tail*, Curbstone Press, Willimantic, CT

SHORT STORIES, ESSAYS, REVIEWS

- 2024 **The Once and Future Lake** (Creative nonfiction Essay) forthcoming in anthology about Great Salt Lake, editor Michael McClane, Torrey House Press.
- 2024 **The Last Streaks** (Fiction) forthcoming in anthology about Great Salt Lake, editor Michael McClane, Torrey House Press.
- 2022 **Darién** (Creative Nonfiction Essay) *Dark Mountain*, Issue 21.
- 2021 **Quizás, or In Utah We Yearn** (Flash Non-fiction) <https://thrive125.utah.gov/torti/>
- 2021 **The Isthmus** (Short Story) in *Women of the Wild: Challenging Gender Disparities in Field Stations and Marine Laboratories*, edited by McDermott, Gee, and May, Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.
- 2020 **How I Am** (Creative Nonfiction Essay), Nicole Walker pandemic web project.
- 2019 **The Smoky World** (Creative Nonfiction Essay) *Dark Mountain*, Issue 15.
- 2019 **Weight** (Creative Nonfiction Essay) in *An Island in the Stream: ecocritical and literary responses to Cuban Environmental Culture*. Edited by Taylor, Slovic, and Soriano. Lexington Books, Lanham, Boulder, New York, London.
- 2016 **Siguiendo a Kenge** (Creative Nonfiction Essay), *La Gaceta*, Cuba.
- 2014 **The Darién** (Creative Nonfiction Essay), *Saltfront*.
- 2014 **Evaporation** (Creative Nonfiction Essay), *Utah Reflections*.
- 2012 **Measuring light in a Congo rainforest** (Essay). *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*.
- 2011 **Bread and Stone** (Short Story), *Fish*, anthology, Cork, Ireland.

- 2009 **Plastic Trust** (Creative Nonfiction Essay) in *Are We Feeling Better Yet? Women Speak about Healthcare in America*. Edited by McKee and Steible. PenUltimate Press, St. Louis, MO.
- 2008 **Words Mountains Speak** (Book Review) *Contact* by J. M. McCarthy. *High Country News*.
- 2008 **The Space Around a Heart** (Short Story) *Wasatch Journal* (April).
- 2007 **Why We Run** (Essay) *City Weekly* (June).
- 2006 **Reduction** (Monologue) Performed by Brande Balken. Pygmalion Theater, Utah Pride Center Production.
- 2006 **Canopy Shyness** (Short Story) *SEED Magazine* (June).
- 2004 **Experimenting with Birds** (Short Story) *River City*.
- 2000 **January 1** (Short Story) *City Weekly, Salt Lake City*.

PUBLICATIONS: SCIENCE

RESEARCH (Peer Reviewed)

- 2004 Goller, F., M. J. Mallinkrodt, S.D. Torti. Beak gape dynamics during song in the zebra finch. *Journal of Neurobiology* 59:289-303.
- 2001 Torti, S.D., P.D. Coley and T.A. Kursar. Causes and consequences of monodominance in tropical lowland forests. *American Naturalist* 134:141-153.
- 2000 Gross, N.D., S.D. Torti, P.D. Coley and D.H. Feener Jr. Tropical monodominance: is reduced herbivory important? *Biotropica*: 32:430-439.
- 1999 Torti, S.D. and P.D. Coley. Tropical monodominance: a preliminary test of the ectomycorrhizal hypothesis. *Biotropica* 31:220-228.
- 1997 Torti, S.D., P.D. Coley and D.A. Janos. Vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae in two tropical monodominant tree species. *Journal of Tropical Ecology* 13:623-629.
- 1995 Torti, S.D., M.D. Dearing and T.A. Kursar. A new method of tannin extraction from leaves. *Journal of Chemical Ecology* 11:233-237.

GOVERNMENT / CONSERVATION WORK (Non-Peer Reviewed)

- 2011 Torti, S.D. *Primula maguirei*: Final Report, US Forest Service.
- 2010 Torti, S.D. *Primula maguirei*: evaluation of interaction of recreational climbers and plants. (US Forest Service).
- 2009 Torti, S.D. and G. Schen. *Primula maguirei*: annual update, US Forest Service.
- 2008 Torti, S.D. *Primula maguirei*: long-term monitoring, US Forest Service.
- 2003 Torti, S.D. Conservation Plan for three, federally listed rare plant species of Southern Utah, Bureau of Land Management.
- 2003 Torti, S.D. Conservation Plan for four sensitive and rare species of northeastern Utah, Bureau of Land Management.
- 2002 Torti, S.D. and A. Cachelin. Succession after fire in Gambel oak habitat: native versus non-native species, US Forest Service.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL SERVICE

- 2020-23 Trustee, Board of Trustees, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana
- 2019-21 Selection panel, Phi Beta Kappa National Book Award for Science

2021	Ad-hoc committee, National Collegiate Honors Council, to renew basic characteristics for honors programs
2021	Planning committee, 2022 Honors Education at Research Universities Conference
2020	Jury member, National Student Essay Competition
2020	Co-chair, APLU session on anti-racism in Honors programs
2019	Chair & Host, Honors Education at Research Universities Conference
2016-18	Board Member at Large, Organization for Biological Field Stations
2012-14	Board Member, Utah Humanities Council

FIELD STATION CONSULTING

2022	Field station review, Highlands Biological Station, Western Carolina University
2021	Field station review, Mpala Research Centre, Laikipia, Kenya for Princeton University
2015	Field station review, Reserva Biológica Colonso-Chalupas, IKIAM Universidad Regional Amazónica, Ecuador

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2012-23	Council of Academic Deans
2020-23	Board Member, Center for Latin American Studies
2019-23	Board Member, Tanner Center for Human Rights
2023	Committee member: Innovative Creativity Task Force
2022	Co-Chair, Search for Library Dean
2022	Committee member, Operation Bold, review of institutional budget
2022	Internal Reviewer, Department of World Languages and Cultures
2022	Chair, Review of Storm Peak Field Station acquisition
2021	Committee member, Operation Bold, President's Transition Committee
2021	Chair, Search for Director of Undergraduate Research Office
2021	Search committee, Dean of College of Humanities
2019	Search committee, Dean of Nursing
2019	Search committee, AVP Enrollment Management
2018-20	Served on Academic Senate
2018-19	Served on VP for Research Task Force Committee
2010-16	Range Creek Field Station Advisory Committee
2014-18	Taft-Nicholson Environmental Education Steering Committee
2012-19	Bonderman Field Station Advisory Committee
2013-19	Connect2Health Advisory Committee
2015	Search committee, HKR Departmental Chair search, College of Health
2014-17	Board Member, Dolowitz Lecturer on Human Rights
2014	Search committee, Senior Science Writer for Marketing
2013	Co-chair, Search Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences Search
2013	Search committee, Environmental Humanities Director
2012	Co-chair, Search for Dean of Marriott Library
2012-14	Served on the Undergraduate Council
2013-15	Served on the Infrastructure Portfolio IT Committee
2013	Ad-hoc member, Departmental review of Physics and Astronomy

2013 Review Member, Departmental review of Film and Media
 2013-15 Reviewer, Stockholm Medal graduate fellowship
 2010 Conference organizer, Tanner Center for Nonviolent Human Rights

TEACHING

2019-2023 Science, Ethics and Human Nature (Honors yearlong colloquium)
 2015-2022 Honors Integrated Minor in Ecology & Legacy: summer intensive with locations varying: Great Basin, Patagonia, and Kenya.
 2018-2019 Dealing with Difference (Honors yearlong colloquium)
 2016, 2017 Ecology of Residence (Environmental Humanities masters course)
 2014, 2016 Science and Storytelling with F. Goller (Honors yearlong course)
 2012 Landscape Ecology at Rio Mesa, cotaught with Landscape Painting
 2010 Co-developed GMAP: GIS/ecology/K-12 teacher-training field course
 2010 Writing the Natural World. Westminster College. Salt Lake City
 2009 Invited Instructor. Ocean State Writing Conference, U. of Rhode Island
 2008 Explorations in Science and Society. Westminster College
 2007 Turning Memoir into Fiction. Lifelong Learning. University of Utah
 2000 Biology 1000, University of Utah (taught again 2002 & 2005)
 2000-2001 Connections. NSF funded course for K-12 teachers. Red Butte Garden

GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEES

2012-2022 Committee member, 8 M.S. students in Environmental Humanities
 Committee member, 2 Ph.D. students in English

INVITED & NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

2020 *Cages* and the neuroscience of birdsong (Go Learn Presentation Nov 24)
 2020 *Inventing Latinos*, Panel for University of Utah College of Law. (Sept 30)
 2020 "Integrated Minors: a new model for honors core curriculum" Dallas, Texas (virtual) with Dr. Monisha Pasupathi. National Collegiate Honors Conference
 2020 Visiting Scholar/Artist "Lab Birds" at Washington College, MD with Krista Caballero
 2018 "Lowering Barriers to Thesis Completion in Honors" National Collegiate Honors Conference panel
 2017 "An Integrated Minor: Ecology & Legacy" Western Regional Honors Council Meeting, UC Riverside, CA.
 2015 "Praxis Labs: Theory + Action as a Foundation of a Modern Honors Education" Honors Education at Research Universities (HERU) Conference, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

ACADEMIC/LITERARY AWARDS

2018 Finalist, 15 Bytes Literary Book Award
 2018 Foreword Reviews 2017 Indies Book of the Year Award, [Silver winner for *Cages*](#)
 2016 Winner, Nicolas Schaffner Award for Music in Literature for novel, *Cages*
 2016 Short-listed for novel, *Cages*, Santa Fe Writers Project
 2011 Runner-up. Fish Short Story Contest. *Bread and Stone*
 2010 Selected novelist, Utah Humanities Council: Authors on Main Street
 2009 Finalist, Cutthroat Short Story Contest. *Bread and Stone*
 2007 Fellowship, Residency at Center for Art and Science in Nature, Farrera, Spain

2005	Winner, Miguel Mármol Award for novel, <i>The Scorpion's Tail</i>
2004	3 rd Place. River City Short Story Contest. <i>Experimenting with Birds</i>
2004	Finalist. Jack Dyer Fiction Prize. <i>Experimenting with Birds</i>
2003	Fellowship, Residency plus travel. Sacatar, Itaparica, Brazil
2002	Fellowship, Residency at Hedgebrook. Whidbey Island, Washington
2000	1 st Place. <i>City Weekly</i> short story contest. <i>January 1, 1994</i>
1997	National Science Foundation, Dissertation Improvement Grant
1996	Sigma Xi Research Grant
1994	Organization for Tropical Studies Research Award
1994-97	National Science Foundation Predoctoral Fellowship, comprehensive funding
1992	Phi Beta Kappa

GRANTS/CONTRACTS

2012	BLM Award Bonderman Field Station to establish common experimental garden
2011	BLM Award to Bonderman Field Station for construction of native plant garden
2008-11	U.S. Forest Service contract to monitor <i>Primula maguirei</i> , federally-listed species endemic to Logan Canyon, Utah
2002	BLM contract to Red Butte Garden collect and study seeds for "Seeds for Change" an international effort between Kew Gardens & BLM
2001	BLM contract, Red Butte Garden for <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> ecology of 6 rare Utah plant species
2001	U.S. Forest Service contract to Red Butte Garden to determine the effects of fire on native and non-native plant regeneration in <i>Quercus gambelii</i> understory