

RESEARCHER PROFILE

An Interview with Miranda Reiter, Ph.D., CFP®

Miranda Reiter is an assistant professor at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. She graduated from Kansas State University with a Ph.D. in Personal Financial Planning. Before academia, she worked as a financial planner and banker at several Fortune 500 firms and created a financial planning practice which had an emphasis on increasing the financial well-being of women. A francophone and lover of international travel and foreign languages, Miranda has spent time in over 30 countries and 5 continents.

Q. Define what you do professionally.

A. I am a tenure-track assistant professor and researcher in the School of Personal Financial Planning at Texas Tech University. I am also a speaker and an author. I speak and write on topics like diversity, equity, and inclusion in the financial planning profession as well as personal finance.

Q. What activities encompass your professional responsibilities?

A. My responsibilities as a professor at Texas Tech are spread over three categories: research, teaching, and service. My research interests include diversity, equity, and inclusion in personal financial planning as well as the impact of race, gender, and intersectionality on consumer decision-making and financial well-being. At Texas Tech, I have taught retirement planning and wealth management. Starting Fall 2022, I will be creating and teaching a Ph.D. level course called Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Financial Planning Research and I could not be more excited. My



service responsibilities include mentoring students, working on a variety of committees at the university, and serving the financial planning profession through different activities, such as helping to develop the first diversity, equity, and inclusion training and certificate program for financial planners and reviewing the scholarly work of my peers.

Q. How long have you been engaged in your professional activity?

A. I have been a professor at Texas Tech University since 2020. Before joining the faculty at Texas Tech, I had been a financial planner at two Fortune 500 companies, ran my own financial planning firm, and had worked in banking as well as in international education. I have taught in France and the Ivory Coast. I had a nearly 20-year career in financial services and education before my life in academia.

Q. What led you to your professional calling?

A. I took advantage of different career and life opportunities before becoming a professor and each opportunity shaped who I am and where I am. At 23 years old, I became licensed to sell investments and insurance as an assistant manager at a regional bank. I eventually became a branch manager at a national bank. All of this happened, right after college, really by accident. I had never planned on helping people with their finances and selling investment and insurance products as a career. It was not because I did not want to; it's just that I did not know that such a career existed.

After several years of working in banking, I found myself needing a break from the hustle and bustle of corporate life and decided to take this amazing opportunity to work for the French Ministry of Education. In France, I began teaching English in an elementary and high school. It was there that I found a love for education. After returning to the United States, I knew I wanted to do something that combined both personal finance and education. I started studying for my CFP® certification and after I passed the exam, I began working as a financial planner.

What struck me about financial planning, unlike banking, was that it seemed to be a lot less diverse in terms of clients and employees. I began to ask myself all these questions about the financial planning industry, mostly related to diversity – or the lack thereof. I wanted to understand more about it. At some point, it occurred to me that I should pursue a research degree, a Ph.D., so that I could investigate my questions. Eventually, I surmised that being a professor would give me the flexibility to do all of the things that I had an interest in: working with people, researching, teaching, and financial planning. Luckily, that turned out to be true!



Q. Do you work alone or do you have a team?

A. Both. Sometimes, working alone is necessary in my profession, but if you are working with a great team, it is typically much more fun and effective that way. It provides a diversity of thoughts and adds more creativity to projects. I have some really amazing researchers in my corner that I am thrilled to collaborate with on a variety of projects.

Q. What theoretical framework guides your work?

A. It depends on the research question. In recent work, I have used the similarity attraction paradigm to explore the topic of consumers' racial and gender preferences while working with financial planners.

Q. Are you working on any projects right now that you are really excited about related to financial therapy?

A. Yes! Last year, I, along with my team of researcher colleagues, won a grant from the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) to assess the validity of the Klontz Money Script Inventory - Revised (KMSI-R) on non-White samples and investigate which KMSI-R money scripts are most at risk for lower financial literacy and financial self-efficacy.

Q. What needs to happen so that 10 years from now we can say that financial therapy is a respected field of study?

A. It is fantastic to see how financial therapy has grown by leaps and bounds over the past decade. Initiatives such as the CFT-ITM certification through the Financial Therapy Association, graduate-level financial therapy certifications, such as the one at Kansas State University, and the *Journal of Financial Therapy* have all been instrumental in advancing financial therapy towards a respected field of study. I believe that this will only continue, given the groundwork that has been laid. My wish is that every consumer knows about financial therapy so that more people can receive the help that they need.

Q. What benefits can the Financial Therapy Association provide to others doing work that is similar to your professional activities?

A. When the *Journal of Financial Therapy* announced its call for papers on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Financial Therapy recently, I was elated. This call is evidence that the DEI topic is important to the Association, and it also shows that it supports me and others like me doing this type of work and research.

Q. If others are interested in finding out more about you personally and professionally, where can they obtain this information?

A. My professor profile is available at <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/hs/pfp/reiter.php>. I am also on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mirandacreiter/>.

Q. If you had unlimited resources, what would your dream financial therapy research project look like?

A. Unlimited resources – what a dream! For many of the research ideas that I have, primary data is ideal because the questions have not been asked of respondents in most of the standard survey questionnaires that are available to researchers. Therefore, my dream research scenario would be a dedicated, fully funded research lab with Ph.D. students on staff as well as affiliated faculty and consultants working on various projects related to diversity, equity, inclusion, race/ethnicity, and gender in the financial realm. Of course, this dream would not be complete without an unlimited budget!



Q. Could you give advice to practitioners who want to get involved in doing their own research or writing on financial therapy?

A. What I love about this field is that because it is still relatively new, there is still so much more to explore. With that said, I think that there is ample opportunity for anyone who wants to write or research about financial therapy to get their voice heard. I would say go for it! The annual FTA conference, other industry conferences, and LinkedIn are great places to connect with others who can assist you as possible collaborators or supporters.