

# Washington State University

## College of Education

### Thao Vo

Will defend the dissertation on

Date: April 3, 2024

Time: 9:00 A.M.

Pullman Campus – Cleveland Hall 353

*Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend*

#### **A JUSTICE-ORIENTATED CRITICAL REVIEW AND COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH WITHIN YOUTH RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Chair: Brian French

In compliance with The Every Student Succeeds Act, many states report “chronic absenteeism” as an indicator of student success. While chronic absenteeism is prevalent across the country, marginalized youth experience differential rates compared to their White peers. The disproportionate overrepresentation of marginalized youth is partly because of a myriad of factors unique to their sociocultural identities and experiences. Risk assessments are one way schools identify factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism and adverse outcomes that constitute major threats to students’ developmental and educational trajectories. Yet, the extent to which risk assessments are designed, evaluated, and used appropriately with marginalized youth is unknown. The first research objective systematically reviewed student risk assessments to provide a critical deconstruction of how, why, and for what purposes risk assessments serve in educational settings. The second research objective explored the social consequences of a specific risk assessment case study through a community-based action research partnership with local Washington state school district leaders, characterizing how risk assessments are used in practice within local communities. These objectives are guided by a justice-orientated antiracist and consequential validity framework that is explicit in its intent to reconstruct power within the dynamics of the research work and in broader society. The results of both studies bring social justice to the forefront of assessment development, practices, and uses, empowering communities to claim expertise about their lived experiences and transform the conditions under which they live, learn, and work.