The current research and scholarship of:

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Focus
Deb's primary research and service focus has been in the area of human trafficking (in Missouri, in the United States, and globally, but with a strong local focus). In 2009-2011 she received funding from the US Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement to build anti-human trafficking work in central Missouri. This involved collaboration with Columbia Police Department, Centro Latino de Salud, and True North to provide training to front line professionals in 13 counties in mid-Missouri (law enforcement, child protection workers, domestic violence/sexual assault programs, health care providers, and others), increase community awareness, and link survivors with services. She is one of the founding members of the non-profit organization, "Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition" (CMSHTC) that grew out of efforts to sustain work begun at a conference organized by MU students (MU Stop Traffic) in 2008. Most recently she is completing work as co-chair of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls (report to come out this year). Her future interest is in the prevention of human trafficking of all types (e.g., forced labor, commercial sex, domestic servitude). She would like to begin with a qualitative study examining success of several approaches to prevention: community organizing/labor organizing in the garment industry in the Dominican Republic, and labor organizing/policy work in domestic service in New York, California, and Washington DC. In the coming year she will be working with Missouri KidsFirst and other partners to add additional tools to the Missouri anti-trafficking legislation.

Most Interesting Finding
The wide diversity of how trafficking happens: who is victimized, who does the trafficking, by what means, and in what circumstances. There simply is not prototypical case, so figuring out response protocols is incredibly challenging.
Biggest Challenge
Getting funders and policy makers interested in prevention rather than just response/prosecution/services after the fact of trafficking. And of course TIME. It is challenging to try to conduct research with teaching responsibilities. Would be great to have support for finding funding and helping to get grants submitted.

Greatest Satisfaction
Seeing changes in the state as a result of what CMSHTC, MU Stop Traffic, and numerous partners (around state and nationally) have done. Direct impact on the lives of survivors that the coalition has assisted; increased public awareness and commitment from policy makers; better prepared front-line workforce.

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