

SOCIOLOGY NEWS

*Department of Sociology
University at Albany
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From the Chair



Richard Lachmann

This September I begin my term as department chair. I join my colleagues in thanking my predecessor, Don Hernandez, for his three years of hard work in service to our department. (How hard I expect I will discover over the next three years.) His job, and mine, is made easier by the culture of our department and by the hard work, intelligence, wisdom and good will of our wonderful professional staff. Faculty are enormously generous in offering their time to departmental tasks. The smooth and well-planned functioning of our department-- in areas ranging from undergraduate advisement, to graduate student mentoring, from faculty recruitment to fielding numerous and sometimes onerous requests from the higher administration for data and

reports—all happens because my colleagues are selfless in their concern for the department and for the individuals who teach and learn here. In addition many of our faculty perform yeoman service on college and university committees, giving Sociology a visible presence in the wider University at Albany community.

Impressively, the sociology faculty have been able to sustain their remarkable scholarly productivity while meeting the growing teaching and administrative demand on their time. Elsewhere in this issue you can read of some of those many accomplishments. Our department has grown in stature and visibility over time, and the scholarly achievements of our graduate students have advanced dramatically in recent years. One of my great pleasures is observing the vibrancy of sociology in the innovative research of our junior colleagues, the continuing vitality of senior faculty, and the promise of our graduate students who are just beginning their scholarly careers, a promise that is fulfilled by our graduates who have joined sociology departments throughout the United States and around the world or who contribute in applied settings.

Our department faces challenges today that are shared in common with those at other universities during this recession. A number of our recently retired faculty have yet to be replaced with new hires. This year's graduate cohort is the smallest in my experience here, which goes back to 1990, and internal funding for research is skimpier

than ever. Yet, I am confident that my colleagues will join me in pulling together to guide our department through the shallow waters and stormy conditions created by the current economic crisis and this nation's weakening commitment to public universities. I hope that our best years are ahead of us. In any event, I know that in the years ahead I will be with the best of colleagues.

From the Undergraduate Director



Russ Ward

As I noted last year, the undergraduate program in Sociology is one of the busiest on campus. We are the third largest major in the College of Arts and Sciences, with some 600 “full” or “intended” majors. The curriculum addresses a wide range of interests, serving the needs of majors and minors, as well as the general student population with courses that link to other majors and to “general education” dimensions. The regular curriculum is supplemented by such additional opportunities as our Honors and Internship programs.

This past year we engaged in some research efforts associated with the ongoing assessment of the program. During the fall

semester we used “course-embedded” measures to assess the extent to which students are accomplishing some specific learning objectives linked to the required courses in theory, methods, and statistics. This was supplemented in the spring semester by a survey of students in the Department's 400-level seminars, which are intended to be a capstone experience as students near the end of their undergraduate programs. Questionnaires asked students how well they feel they have accomplished the range of learning objectives which we have designated as part of the undergraduate program's mission; questions also sought student feedback about the advisement process in Sociology. I won't burden you here with all of the details from these two assessment activities, but I can offer summaries: Some students struggle with some of the learning objectives, for example in theory and methods, but for the most part students appear to be successful in gaining an understanding of what we feel are the central elements of a sociology major. Students are also generally satisfied with the advisement they have received in the program, though they raise some concerns that are common on campus, especially in large majors. What we have learned over the past year will help us in our continuing efforts to provide a high-quality sociological education and to guide students in meeting their needs and goals.

Recognition Ceremony

The Department's Recognition Ceremony during commencement weekend filled the Campus Center Ballroom with graduating majors, their family and friends, and departmental faculty and staff. This ceremony, which we have organized since 2001, offers a more personal way than the

much larger University ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating seniors. The keynote speaker was Steven Napolitano, a 1980s Sociology graduate of UAlbany who is now a partner in a NYC law firm. Mr. Napolitano harkened back to his own experiences as a Sociology major and how they have served him in his subsequent endeavors (see excerpts, below).

Professor Ryan King gave a moving remembrance of Richard Bailey, a Sociology major who was tragically killed in the fall; the Class of 2009 created a scholarship fund in Richard Bailey's name to which Sociology faculty and staff contributed, and the University and the Department presented him with posthumous degree recognition.

The Recognition Ceremony was also an opportunity to celebrate the particular achievements of our students. Courtney D'Allaird was recognized for receiving a Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence and an Outstanding Senior Award. Joseph Boskovski received the Best Sociology Research Paper Award, as well as a Presidential Award for Undergraduate Research. Elise Bellefeuille also received a Presidential Award for Undergraduate Research. Anthony Brigano received the Graduating Senior with Highest GPA Award.

Excerpts from Keynote Address

by Steven Napolitano '85

"I think I had to take Introduction to Sociology as a freshman. One of those mandatory first year classes in a large lecture center Intro to Sociology sounded like it was going to be nails on a chalk board boring. Nothing could be further from the truth. From the first chapter of my Intro to Sociology textbook I was hooked. It was endlessly fascinating to me. All of the things I had wondered about my whole life.

How does society work (or not work)? How do groups of people relate with each other? Why do crowds sometimes do very good things and other times very bad things? How do the different socioeconomic classes in the United States interact with each other? I think it took me about a week to decide that this was it for me. I'm pretty sure I had my major picked by Thanksgiving my freshman year. I remember going back to my dorm and thinking "I can't believe this is actually school work. I can't wait to read this stuff." And I never regretted my decision to major in sociology for one minute. ... It was one of the best decisions I ever made. The degree I received here prepared me well for law school and my career as a lawyer. My practice tends to focus on product liability and mass tort litigation. I have spent a great deal of my professional life working with expert witnesses in a variety of disciplines, including economics, marketing, psychology, statistics and many other fields. It is no overstatement to say that I use skills first learned here regularly in what I do for a living. My only regret, strange as this may seem, is that I did not take a few more classes in statistics."

Internship Program



Joanne Kaufman

For the past two years I have had the pleasure of serving as the director of the

undergraduate internship program. In this program, advanced undergraduates earn three credits in Sociology 490 by applying their sociological knowledge to weekly work at various types of agencies in the Capital District. Students apply for the internship course by the middle of the semester before the semester they plan to complete the work. Applicants should be seniors, have a 3.0 GPA or higher, and have completed the majority of their coursework for the major. Typically, 7-13 students complete the internship each semester in a variety of settings such as the Equinox Domestic Violence Shelter, the Albany County Crime Victims and Sexual Violence Center, the Albany County Sheriff's Department, the Albany County District Attorney's Office of Community Prosecution, the New York State Attorney General's Office of Consumer Fraud, and Holding Our Own/The Women's Building. Each intern works 8-10 hours per work at their placement site and completes a 10-15 page paper that applies their sociological knowledge from prior courses to the internship experience.

Faculty members in the department of sociology oversee the paper component by meeting with each intern 2-3 times over the course of the semester. Interns have found this experience to be very rewarding in giving them exposure to future career opportunities and making the link between sociological knowledge and real-world work. Many interns have continued to volunteer at the site after the internship has ended and some have also been hired on once they have graduated. Overall, this is a very rewarding experience for advanced sociology undergraduates and the placement sites that sponsor them. I look forward to my continued work as the director over the next year.

Honors Program



David Wagner

The department's honors program continues to generate a small but steady stream of interesting and innovative research projects put together by some very talented undergraduates. Just in the last two years, students have submitted theses concerned with the relationship between restorative justice practices and recidivism, gender differences in students' knowledge about financial matters, the role of advertising in public discourse, some issues regarding the effectiveness of the American welfare system, the effect of location of campus residence on fear of crime, and the consequences of college experience for changes in students' religiosity. Several have won Undergraduate Research Awards from the University and have been presented at the Undergraduate Research Conference held each spring.

I am implementing some changes this year that I hope will expand the number of students who participate in the program. The most important of these changes is that students will be invited to join the program at the beginning of the junior year (rather than at the end of the year) and enroll in the

Honors Research Seminar in the spring of the junior year. The hope is that the earlier start will give students more time to put together their research proposals and to complete more extensive research projects.

From the Graduate Director



Zai Liang

We have had a very good year with the graduate program, and I am happy to highlight some of our achievements by graduate students. First, congratulations to **Dr. Joleen Loucks** who received [her](#) Ph.D. in May 2009. I am sure this is an exciting time for her and we wish her well in her career ahead. Second, several graduate students received dissertation grants and national recognition. **Jeremy Pais** has been recently awarded a NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant. As far as I can remember this is the first NSF dissertation grant awarded to our graduate student since 2002 when I began teaching at Albany. I also note that late last summer, **David Chunyu** received a one-year Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from Chiang Ching-

Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange (USA). **Reese Kelly** is one of seven 2009 Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellows in Women's Studies selected from a nationwide competition. A section from his thesis entitled "Border-Crossing: Transgender Identity Management" also won the 2008 New York State Sociological Association Graduate Student Paper Award. Third, Roberto Velez won the University at Albany's Dissertation Award. This is the fourth year in a row we have had a student win the award. We must be doing something right and I hope this legacy can continue next year. Within the Department of Sociology, we have winners of the 2009 Paul Meadows Excellence in Teaching Award (**Kim Tauches**), 2009 Paul Meadows Excellence in Research Award (**Jeremy Pais & Allen Wong**), and the 2009 Allen E. Liska Dissertation Award (**Reese Kelly**). Again, Congratulations to all!!!

It is an exciting time to begin my second year as Director of Graduate Studies. I am excited because of recent changes and potential opportunities for the Department. Perhaps the biggest change is our success in recruitment of a group of high caliber new faculty members. By my account, a total of 8 new faculty members joined the Department in the past three to four years. The addition of new faculty has further strengthened our graduate program and positions us well into the future in training the next generation of Sociologists. I set up three initial goals for next year. First, perhaps inspired by the addition of so many new faculty in the Department, I will encourage faculty and new faculty especially to offer new cutting-edge graduate classes in theory, methods, and other substantive and emerging areas of research. This will ensure our graduate students continue to be well trained and equipped as they prepare to launch their own careers. Second, I will work with graduate students,

dissertation committee members, SOS members, and Office of Sponsored Program on campus to increase our portfolio of external dissertation grants. External dissertation grants (such as dissertation grants from the National Science Foundation and other private foundations) represent high prestige and accomplishments for our graduate students and often help greatly with job placement for our students down the road. Third, a successful graduate program depends on recruiting first-rate graduate students. Building on the efforts of my predecessors to increase diversity in our graduate program, I will work with the Department's Diversity Committee to make a particular effort to recruit talented minority students.

In closing, I want to offer my heartfelt appreciation to Prof. Ron Jacobs for his service as Graduate Director while I was on sabbatical in spring 2009. Ron played a pivotal role in helping my transition into the role of Graduate Director in fall 2008 and has continuously offered his guidance along the way. I also want to thank Nickie Michaud Wild, president of SOS, for her contribution. Last year was also a year of major changes for our graduate student teaching requirement. I want to thank Professors Don Hernandez, Karyn Loscocco, and Steve Messner, for their leadership and contributions in making this transition as smooth as possible. Let me also thank Cathy Rose and Stacey Zyskowski. I know it is impossible to run our graduate program without their tireless work and dedication to our program. Finally, I welcome our new cohort of excellent graduate students and I look forward to working with each one of you.

Students of Sociology (SOS)



Nickie Michaud Wild

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made the 2008-2009 academic year such a productive and informative year for SOS. We had a series of incredibly helpful Brown Bag Lunches which included "Writing and the Publication Process" by Prof. Sam Friedman; "How to Present at Conferences" by Reese Kelly; comprehensive exam survival by Jess Singer and Kim Tauches; "Balancing Family and Professional Life" by Prof. Steve Messner, with discussants Professors Beth Popp-Berman, Glenna Spitze, Joanne Kaufman and Kathy Trent; and "Preparing Your C.V." by Prof. Glenna Spitze. Alongside these more academic pursuits, SOS hosted several informal get-togethers at local establishments, picnics, and a kickball game against the Anthropology Department grad students. This year, SOS also co-sponsored an event with the other RGSOs QUAGS and Catalyst: a performance by activist, artist, and singer-songwriter Magdalen Hsu-Li. Thanks to all the professors and staff of the Sociology Department who helped us make this year so successful. For all their hard work, I would also like to thank this year's officers: Brown Bag Coordinator Ian Sheinheit, Vice President and Faculty Liaison Brian McKernan, Secretary Mike Barton,

Social Chair Lauren Porter, and GSO Representative Elizabeth Kozakiewicz. You all helped make the 2008-2009 year helpful, enlightening and fun for the grad students that took part. I wish good luck to the incoming officers.

Recent Ph.D. Recipients

2009

Joleen Loucks, "Adult Children's Experiences Following Mid to Late Life Parental Divorce."

2008

Lindsay Hixson, "Reconceptualizing Cohabitation: Commitment among Nonmarried Heterosexual Couples."

Astrid Eich-Krohm, "From Temporary to Permanent? A Qualitative Study About Settlement Decisions of German Professionals and Their Families on Assignment in the U.S."

Minjeong Kim, "Gendering Marriage Migration and Fragmented Citizenship Formation: 'Korean' Wives, Daughters-In-Law, and Mothers From the Philippines."

Randolph Hohle Jr., "Symbolic Citizenship, Ethical Practice, and the Body: Competing Political Projects in the Black Civil Rights Movement 1954-1968."

Shannon Monnat, "The Color of Welfare Sanctioning: A Multi-Level Analysis of the Benefit Reductions & Case Closures Under Welfare Reform."

Hideki Morooka, "Acculturation, Socio-Economic Assimilation and Health among Asian Americans."

Peter Shrock, "Actual and Potential Harms in the Politics of Regulation: The Case of OSHA."

Roberto Velez, "Because History Does Not Allow Us... Collective Memory and the Articulation of Mobilization Narratives in the Antimilitary Movement of Vieques (1999-2003)."

2007

Enobong Hannah Branch, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Black Women, A Century in the Bottom Class, 1860 - 1960."

Marcia Hernandez, "The Challenges and Rewards of Sisterhood: An Exploration of Women's Experiences in Black Sororities."

Jynette Larshus, "Tensions of Transformations in Snowboarding Culture: From lifestyle sporting activity to Legitimate Occupation."

Toni Lang, "Changing Maternal Profile and the Rise of Short Gestation and Low Birth Weight Rates in the United States Between 1981 and 2002"

Laura Mills, "Independent Consultants - A case study on a type of highly-skilled contingent labor"

Hyung-jin Shin, "Intermarriage Patterns of New Immigrants: Understanding the Social Boundaries of Hispanic and Asian Americans."

Entering Graduate Students, Fall 2009

Sylvia Piatkowska. BA NHTI; MA Opole University. Interests: Urban Sociology, Race and Ethnicity; Work.

Na Yeong Kim. BA Sogang University. Interests: Urban, Socialization, and Globalization.

Brandie Dingman. BA SUNY Albany. Interests: Demography, Race and Ethnicity.

Sarah Al-Kabour. BA Michigan State. Interests: Families, Social Stratification, Immigration.

Katherine Moloney. BA Holy Cross, MA Northeastern University. Interests: Urban Sociology, Demography.

Meghan O'Neill. BA Southern Connecticut State University, MA Columbia University. Interests: gender, families.

Lacy Mitchell. BA University of Houston. Interests: Criminology, Political Sociology.

Joseph Gibbons. BA Ramapo College, MA The New School for Social Research. Interests: Urban Sociology.

Joshua McCabe. BA Emmanuel College, MA UMass Lowell. Interests: Race, Urban Sociology, Economic Sociology.

Selina Labriola. BA University at Albany. Interests: Global issues, Sex and Gender, Inequality.

In addition, the following two students from the current first-year cohort, are moving from external fellowships onto departmental assistantships:

Matthias Revers. BA University of Vienna. Interests: Media Sociology, Cultural Sociology.

YuChing Cheng. BA National University of Taiwan. Interests: Cultural Sociology, Media Sociology

Graduate Student News

Carolyn Corrado won a SAGE/Pine Forge Teaching Innovations & Professional Development Award. The awards prepare a new generation of scholars and leaders in the Teaching Movement in Sociology by providing supplemental funds to support participation in the [ASA] Section on Teaching and Learning's pre-conference workshop, "Teachers are Made, Not Born." The awards include \$500 to reimburse for expenses in attending this year's pre-conference.

Reese C. Kelly was awarded a University at Albany Benevolent Grant for his dissertation research as well as the departmental Liska Dissertation Award. He also was awarded the Woodrow Wilson Women's Studies Dissertation Fellowship. In addition, he has accepted a visiting instructor position for this fall semester at Middlebury College (Middlebury, VT) where he will be teaching Sociology of Gender and Transgender Studies.

Carey Jean Sojka recently won a \$500 award for research through the Patricia Stocking Brown Fund for Feminist Social

Justice Research in University Libraries. The Campus News story on the awards is at http://www.albany.edu/news/campus_news_6294.php

Suzanne Pennington published an article titled "Bisexuals 'Doing Gender' in Romantic Relationships" in the March 2009 issue of the *Journal of Bisexuality*.

Chris Galvan has been accepted/invited with funding as one of about 20 graduate students to participate in the Advanced Spatial Analysis Workshop in Spatial Pattern Analysis sponsored by the Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science being held at UCSB this July. More information on the Workshop can be found at <http://www.csiss.org/GISPopSci/workshops/2009/UCSB/>

Jeremy Pais has been awarded an NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant for his project entitled "Multiethnic Populations, Career Trajectories, and Socioeconomic Mobility." His research seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the effect of immigration and increasing ethnic diversity on intragenerational socioeconomic mobility among race, ethnic, and gender groups in the post-civil rights era.

Scott Dolan attended the Harvard Political Networks conference, where he gave a poster presentation on "Protecting the 'duality of persons and groups': A Two-Mode Analysis of Nonprofits in the Power Elite." He received a \$600 NSF travel fellowship to attend the conference.

Faculty News

Ryan King received the ASA's Sociology of Law Section 2009 Best Article Award for a paper published in the *AJS* last year.

Samantha Friedman recently received an NICHD grant entitled, "Cybersegregation: Is Neil a More Desirable Tenant than Tyrone or Jorge?" She and Gregory D. Squires (George Washington University) are conducting audits of the electronic housing markets in Boston, MA and Dallas, TX. Sam's recent work appeared in *Social Science Research*.

Angie Y. Chung's book, *Legacies of Struggle: Conflict and Cooperation in Korean American Politics* (Stanford University Press, 2007) will be featured at the Author-Meets-Critic Session at this year's ASA meetings. The panel of critics will include distinguished professors Michael Omi, Pyong Gap Min, and Aldon D. Morris with Monisha Das Gupta as president.

Professor Chung has also been appointed to serve on the ASA Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities.

Christine E. Bose was elected as the Eastern Sociological Society 2011 President/President-elect. Her new book *Global Gender Research* has recently been released by Routledge

Elizabeth Popp Berman was elected to the council for the ASA Science, Knowledge and Technology section.

Richard Lachmann's new book, *States and Power*, will be published by Polity Press in January 2010. The book provides a theoretical framework for understanding recent work on state formation, the rise of

nationalism, the role of states in economic development and social benefits, and the causes of state breakdowns in the contemporary world.

Aaron Major spent three days in July, the 20th through the 22nd, at the archives of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, located in Paris, France. He was looking at the records of Working Party 3, a sub-committee within the Organization's Economic Policy Committee, for the years 1961 to 1969. The Working Party was important at this time because it was a key site where high level officials in the governments of Western Europe and North America met to discuss international monetary cooperation. The archive was very thorough, containing a full set of meeting minutes as well as a series of technical papers that were discussed.

His interest in this material is in understanding how international economic cooperation works. How do states understand their interests with regard to international economic cooperation, and how do institutions like Working Party 3 work to allow participant states to exert influence over one another, despite the lack of any kind of formal enforcement powers? The material that he gathered will help him develop his doctoral dissertation into a book manuscript. The research was supported by a University FRAP-B grant.

Dave Wagner has been elected as Secretary/Treasurer of the Mathematical Sociology Section of the ASA. He will serve a three-year term beginning this fall. More locally, he has been serving on several panels concerned with important University issues: first a committee concerned with improving the University's undergraduate writing program, more recently a panel focusing on how to deal with the effects of

the ongoing state budget crisis on the University's academic programs, and finally a group charged with reviewing all the doctoral programs on campus.

Zai Liang (with Steve Messner) has received a 2-year grant from the Lingnan Foundation to continue research and training activities for the Urban China Research Network (UCRN) based at UAlbany. UCRN held an international conference on urban China in January 4-6, 2009 in Guangzhou, a southern Chinese city, with about 50-60 professors and graduate students in attendance. The conference participants also spent one day doing fieldwork: visited one factory in the nearby city Dongguan and a well-known historical village in Southern China. UCRN will hold another international conference in Albany, tentatively scheduled for May 2010. With support from the Lingnan Foundation as well as several internal sources (including UAlbany Conference Award Program), we hope to invite selected graduate students and colleagues from China as well as UAlbany faculty members and graduate students in the social sciences to participate in this international conference. Professor Liang has also been nominated to serve a 2-year term as a member of Population Sub-committee of the National Institutes of Health.

Steven Messner has been elected President of the American Society for Criminology.

**We Gratefully Acknowledge
Recent Donors**

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