

Greetings from the Head of Sociology: Donna Barnes

The department had a very successful 2011-12 academic year. As part of its assessment plan, the department required its graduating seniors to take the Educational Testing Service's Major Field Test in Sociology for the first time. This is a national exam administered to sociology majors at over fifty colleges and universities. Our seniors excelled, scoring in the 92nd percentile overall. Their strong performance reflects well on their knowledge of the field and on the quality of the department's curriculum and faculty.

The department is also proud of senior sociology major Sean Moran. He was named one of the Outstanding/Top 20 Graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences. He also received the prestigious Tobin Award, which annually recognizes the Top Male Graduate at UW. This is the second year in a row where a sociology major earned the Top Graduating Senior Award at the University of Wyoming; last year sociology major Amy Reiser won the Spitaleri/Top Female Graduate Award.

The department also had a successful year in fund-raising. It reached the level of donations to its Meeks Memorial Scholarship Fund needed to trigger \$50,000 in state matching funds. The Meeks Fund was created in honor of Chet Meeks, a former undergraduate major who died from colon cancer in 2008. Now that it is endowed with funds in excess of \$100,000, it will provide support in perpetuity for the summer research projects of students in our Masters' program. The research projects of this year's Meeks Award recipients are highlighted in the Student Research section of the newsletter. Our other special funds, the Flittie Fund and Wilbourne Excellence Fund, are also on solid financial footing. The department is very appreciative of its alumni and friends who help financially during these times of tight budgets and fiscal restraint!

Best regards,

Donna Barnes

Special Faculty News

Professor Anna Zajacova received an Extraordinary Merit in Research Award this past year. Since joining the department three years ago, she has published eighteen articles and has received about a quarter-million dollars in external grants. She is not only an accomplished researcher, but is also an excellent teacher and wonderful colleague. The department is very fortunate to have her as one of its faculty!

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Faculty Highlights (continued)



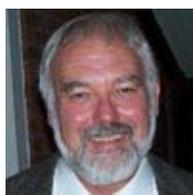
Professor David Ashley is retiring this year after 25 years of teaching in the department. He taught the required Sociological Theory course to many of our alumni, and co-authored the textbook (which is in its seventh edition) that was often used in the course. For those who would like to send him a pre-retirement email, his email address is: ashleywy@uwyo.edu.



Professor **Quee-Young Kim** is retiring this year after almost 35 years of teaching in the department. He has taught a wide variety of courses for the department, many of which dealt with international development and globalization. His final semester (Spring 2013) will be a research semester in which he plans to focus on an article on serial reciprocity in Japanese culture (with Richard Machalek) and an article on world-systems theory.

The department wishes both David and Quee-Young the best!

Faculty Research



As part of an ongoing research agenda on police violence in minority communities, Professor **Malcolm Holmes** (and collaborator Brad Smith) published a theoretical paper on the dynamics of extra-legal police aggression in *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (July/August 2012). The article focuses on police actions that aim to injure citizens without legal justification—the use of profane language and racial slurs, intrusive searches without cause, and excessive force. Relying on various theoretical perspectives from social psychology, Holmes and Smith argue that both the racial identity of citizens and the ecological context in which they are encountered influence the incidence of extra-legal police aggression. Less serious forms of extra-legal aggression, such as unnecessary searches, may occur both in predominantly white and predominantly minority neighborhoods but with different motivations. More serious cases of excessive force, however, tend to occur primarily in disadvantaged minority neighborhoods, where police feel threatened and may over-react to citizens who fit racial stereotypes about crime.



Professor **Matthew Painter's** article "Cohabitation History, Marriage, and Wealth Accumulation," co-authored with Jonathan Vespa, attracted quite a bit of attention, including comments on the Wall Street Journal blog. The article provides the first evidence of a positive marital outcome associated with premarital cohabitation and contradicts previous research showing that cohabitation results in worse marital outcomes. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, an ongoing study that has followed a cohort of young baby boomers since they were in high school in 1979, he and Vespa explored the net worth accumulation of married individuals in light of their premarital cohabitation histories. They found that couples who lived together before marrying, on average, accumulated greater wealth than those who did not live together before marriage. To quote Professor Painter: "Individuals who marry their one and only cohabiting partner experience a wealth premium that is twice as large as that for married individuals who never cohabited prior to marrying." The cohabitation advantage is all the more remarkable since these couples begin their marriage with less wealth, on average, when compared to the directly married. The article was published in *Demography*, the flagship journal of the Population Association of America.

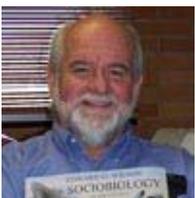
Faculty Research (continued)



Several of the articles that Professor **Anna Zajacova** published this year included findings that challenged the widely accepted belief that adults with more education also have uniformly better health. Dr. Zajacova, with collaborators from the University of Colorado, University of Michigan, and University of Illinois, found that adults who earned the GED diploma, assumed to be equivalent to a regular high school diploma, do not have equivalent health. Instead, the GED recipients had as many health problems as high school dropouts despite their additional educational credential. In another study, she found that those adults who attended college but did not earn a bachelor's degree were not better off than high school graduates. Despite having more education, and often additional credential (associate degree), they had more chronic conditions, pain, and even acute conditions like colds. These novel results will help explain how and why education is linked to adult health, a pressing concern for not only health policy but also educational policy making. The papers were published at the American Journal of Public Health, one of the top-ranking epidemiology journals in the world, Social Science and Medicine, and Social Science Quarterly.



Professor **Donna Barnes** received the 2012 Louisiana Literary Award from the Louisiana Library Association for her book, *The Louisiana Populist Movement, 1889-1900*, which was published by the Louisiana State University Press in Spring 2011. She was honored at a dinner held last March by the library association and received a cash award and an engraved bronze medalion. She is now working on two articles, with former student Sandy Root-Elledge, on the anti-military service protest movement within the Heart Mountain Japanese American internment camp during World War II.



Professor **Richard Machalek** has an article "Sacrifice, Gratitude, and Obligation: Serial Reciprocity in Early Christianity" (co-authored with Michael Martin), which is forthcoming in a special "Biosociology and Neurosociology" issue of *Advances in Group Processes*. When smallpox and measles plagues swept Europe in 165 and 251 C. E., some Christians were reported to have acted as nurses and caregivers for victims. Those who benefited from nursing and survived their illnesses often became nurses and caregivers themselves. The evolved *emotions* of gratitude, sympathy and empathy and the novel theological *meanings* which instructed Christians to care for others converged to activate patterns of altruism that social scientists call "serial reciprocity." In serial reciprocity, a person "repays" a benefactor by providing aid to a third-party beneficiary, a process sometimes described as "paying it forward." It is likely that serial reciprocity played a significant sociological role in contributing to the rise of Christianity as a social movement during the first three or four centuries of its existence.

Staff Award



The department's Senior Office Associate, **Elaine Force**, won the E. G. Meyer Family Outstanding Staff Service Award. With hundreds of UW Staff eligible for the award, it is an honor to be a recipient. The department is fortunate to have someone with Elaine's abilities and commitment. This past year marked her sixteenth year with the department!

Undergraduate Student Awards



Sean Moran, who graduated with a B.A. in sociology, psychology, and criminal justice, was one of the recipients of the **College of Arts and Sciences Top 20/Outstanding Graduates Award**. Each department in the college can nominate its best students for this award, which is based on academic accomplishments and service to the university and community. Almost all of the nominees have a grade point average above 3.8, as well as extensive involvement in service projects on and off campus. It is quite an honor to be a finalist.

Sean also received the **Tobin Award** as the University of Wyoming's outstanding male graduate. While this award recognizes academic excellence, it also places strong emphasis on contributions to the university and to the larger off-campus community. Sean's list of service contributions is very impressive. It would be difficult to find a UW student more committed to balancing an academic focus with commitment to service. Lastly, Sean received the **Jason Thompson Commitment to Diversity Award**, which is awarded by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. This award, established about a decade ago, was named in honor of Jason Thompson, a former sociology major who became the first African American president of ASUW. Congratulations, Sean, for being the recipient of these three major awards!



Nicole Jensen and Sean Moran were this year's recipients of **Flittie Scholarships**. This scholarship recognizes academic excellence among our undergraduate majors, and the selection process is very competitive. The faculty selects the recipients from a pool of majors who have completed their junior year with a minimum 3.5 grade point average in their sociology courses. Nicole and Sean are pictured with Dr. Painter.

Graduate Student Awards



Sherri Sasnett and Bethany Kopsa Williamson (shown here with Professor Holmes, Dean Oliver Walker, and his wife Sidney) were the 2012 recipients of the Chet Meeks Summer Research Awards. These awards are funded by the Chet Meeks Memorial Scholarship Fund and are competitively awarded based on research proposals submitted by our graduate students. Please see the brief description of Sherri and Bethany's research projects in the *Student Research* section.



Sherri Sasnett was also the recipient of an Arts and Sciences Summer Independent Research Award. These awards are competitive, with students from all departments within the college eligible to compete for funding. Competition is stiff, so the department is proud that Sherri received one of the awards to advance her thesis research ("Are the Kids Alright? An Ethnographic Study of Adults with Gay/Lesbian Parents").

Student Internship Highlight



In addition to working on her thesis research, **Bethany Kopsa Williamson** completed a Summer 2012 internship. She has a strong interest in both sociology and criminal justice. It was the latter interest that led her to choose an internship in the federal probation office in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Here is her personal description of the experience:

At the federal level, probation officers work primarily for the federal courts to assist them in the administration of justice, as well as supervise offenders before and after trial. During my internship I shadowed a supervising officer. Much of our time was spent observing court proceedings. With a select few cases, I oversaw the process from the initial court appearance to final sentencing. I had the opportunity to sit in with officers as they presented their reports to the judges. In one case I conducted all of the interviews with the offender, his family, friends and employers, and then wrote the report and recommendation myself. To have my work presented before the judge and then referenced by the judge during final sentencing was highly rewarding.

When I was not in the court room or developing pre-sentence reports, I was out in the field wearing a bullet-proof vest and accompanying officers on home visits. Despite the obvious dangers of the job, the majority of home visits were interesting and uneventful. I saw firsthand the relationship between officers and offenders. Interacting with offenders out in the community was much different than what I had previously experienced and was a wonderful opportunity.

My internship provided me with a rare opportunity that most students do not experience before entering a desired work field. Being able to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to real life situations is an experience I would highly recommend to other students.

Student Research News



Sean Moran and **Nicole Jensen**, both graduating seniors, represented the department at the Undergraduate Research Fair held on campus this past spring. Sean's paper was titled "Technology Use and Intimate Relationships among College Students: Conflict Styles and Relationship Satisfaction." The title of Nicole's presentation was "Serenity and Conflict: Using Sociological Theory to Understand Science Fiction." It is always great to see our undergraduate majors getting first-hand experience with research and paper presentations.



Sherri Sasnett's thesis, titled "Are the Kids All Right? An Ethnographic Study of Adults with Gay/Lesbian Parents," focuses on how people who have a gay/lesbian parent(s) manage their identities and how they tell their personal narratives. She is interested in whether parental sexual orientation has a significant impact on an individual's level of self-reported emotional adjustment, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. She is assessing this primarily through interviews that encourage respondents to talk about past experiences and interactions, as well as their feelings about themselves, their choices, and their ability to handle challenging situations/encounters. With the support of a Meeks' Summer Research Award and an A&S Summer Independent Research Award, she met with members of various community groups that focus on gays and their families to discuss her research and recruit participants. She also posted flyers on various college campuses, as well as notices on Craigslist, Facebook, and community meeting sites. To date, she has collected data from fifteen respondents. She anticipates meeting her goal of twenty respondents by mid-December and has started the process of transcribing interviews.

Student Research News (continued)



Bethany Kopsa Williamson: During this past summer, with the support of a Meeks' Summer Research Award, Bethany worked to complete the statistical analysis section of her thesis. Her thesis focuses on learning disabled inmates and the interactions and relationships they have with correctional facility staff and inmates. She used previously collected data from the Survey of State and Federal Correctional Facilities in 2004 and ran four different regression models to complete the analysis. She commented:

As I don't doubt many researchers before me have discovered when working through statistical programs, there are many unexpected challenges that present themselves. This summer provided me the opportunity to not only develop my thesis, but also my knowledge of SPSS. The data set I selected to work with proved to be more complex to navigate than I had originally anticipated. Despite some small setbacks, I was able to complete the analysis and have begun interpreting my results and writing the methods section of my thesis. This fall I continue to work on both of these areas, as well as the section in which I discuss the theoretical basis for my research.



Alyson Hinman successfully completed her thesis, "Internet Use and Trust: Predicting Internet Use and Its Effect on a User's General Social Trust," in Spring 2012. She is currently enrolled in the Counseling Education graduate program at the University of Wyoming and is scheduled to teach the Race and Ethnic Relations course for Sociology next summer.

Alumni News



Jeffrey Jacquet received a Master's Degree in Sociology from our department in 2005. Subsequently, he took a position working with a coalition of local governments to provide socioeconomic impact assessment from natural gas drilling operations occurring in Sublette County, Wyoming. In interviews collected for the "Energy Boom" oral history collection at UW's American Heritage Center, county officials referred to him as "an unsung hero" and praised the insight that he provided local government officials on assessing the social impact of the oil field boom on communities. He has provided impact assessment of energy development professionally since that time and has worked in Wyoming, Colorado, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.

He pursued a PhD in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University, which he recently completed. He is now an assistant professor at South Dakota State University in Sociology and Rural Studies, which has an Energy and Environmental Sociology track, which makes the position a great fit for him.



Candace May received her M.A. degree in sociology from UW in 2006 before entering the doctoral program in sociology at Colorado State University. She completed her dissertation in Summer 2011, which was titled "Visibility, Legitimacy, and Power: A North Carolina Fishing Community and Governance of the Commons." She worked on a K-12 science enhancement project funded by the National Science Foundation and also worked for the International Food Policy Research Institute on a project related to natural resources and violent conflict.

During this academic year, she will be a sociology instructor at both CSU and UW. The department is looking forward to having her back on the fourth floor of Ross Hall as an instructor, even if we have to share her with CSU!

Alumni News (continued)



Claire Fairley Maloney received her M.A. degree in sociology from UW in Spring 2011. The department is fortunate that she chose to stay in Laramie after graduating. She is doing a fantastic job teaching the Social Problems course this fall and will teach a section of the introductory Sociological Principles course next spring. It is great to have such a bright and well-trained sociologist to assist the department as it awaits authorization to hire new faculty to replace those who have retired.

Donor Information

The department is very appreciative of the financial donations of its alumni. Past donations have helped fund guest speakers; the activities of our student club, OASIS (Organization of Active Students Interested in Sociology); merit scholarships for sociology majors; research scholarships for our graduate students; and student participation in regional conferences.

The easiest way to make a donation is with a credit card through the secure online web link: www.uwyo.edu/giveonline. When designating the gift recipient, select the College of Arts and Sciences. Then specify that the gift should be directed to the Department of Sociology. If you wish, you may further direct your donation to one of our special funds: The Flittie Scholarship Fund, which supports cash awards to our top majors; the Meeks Memorial Fund, which supports competitive summer research awards for our graduate students; and the Wilbourne Excellence Fund, which supports educational enrichment activities within the department.

If you prefer to mail your donation, you may send a check (payable to the UW Foundation/Department of Sociology) to the UW Foundation, 1200 East Ivinson St, Laramie, WY 82070-4159 or to the Department of Sociology, Dept 3293, University of Wyoming, 1000 E. University Ave, Laramie, WY 82071.

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