A Note from the Chair

Hello and welcome back! I’m delighted to report that the department has had a stimulating and productive year despite the challenges of the national and state economy. Our majors continued to grow; 44 students graduated with their degree in Sociology last year; and two of this year’s graduates, Peter Lista and Brianna Sepulveda, will be entering sociology graduate programs next fall! Our faculty also continued to be very active in their research on a wide range of topics, some in collaboration with students, and in the presentation of their research at almost a dozen national or regional conferences, setting the stage for future publications. The passing of time also brought some goodbyes: Professors Joan Spade and Lynne Moulton left the College. And while they are sorely missed we wish them the best in their new endeavors!

Academic year 2012-2013 promises to be an exciting one for us all. We are very pleased to announce that Professor Melody Boyd and Professor Tristan Bridges have joined the faculty in tenure-track positions and will begin teaching in the fall. The Department of Sociology is also in the midst of developing a 4+1 program with Public Administration. This would be a combined degree, which would allow students to complete their bachelor’s in sociology and a master’s in public administration in just five years. Finally, given the many changes the department has undergone in the past several years, we are embarking on a curriculum redevelopment project—one that better meets the needs of students in the 21st century. Stay tuned for these and other developments.

Julie Ford,
Associate Professor & Department Chair
Two New Faculty Members to Join Sociology Department in Fall 2012

The Department of Sociology is pleased to announce that two new faculty will join the department in fall 2012. After conducting an exhaustive search during the 2011-12 school year, the department is thrilled that Dr. Tristan Bridges and Dr. Melody Boyd have accepted positions here. Both come to Brockport from highly respected universities and bring with them a wealth of knowledge in their respective areas of expertise. Students will benefit greatly from their teaching and research experience.

Dr. Tristan Bridges

For fun, Tristan enjoys reading, writing, and running. He’s excited to run races in and around Brockport and Rochester, though less excited about running in the colder months of the year. Tristan also is a new father and loves spending time with his infant son Ciaran—a child students are sure to hear about a great deal!

Dr. Melody Boyd

Dr. Melody Boyd received her PhD in Sociology from Temple University, after which she was a postdoctoral researcher in the Population Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

Melody’s teaching and research interests are in the areas of race/ethnicity, urban sociology, sociology of the family, education, housing policy and qualitative research methods.

Melody’s research primarily focuses on urban poverty with an emphasis on the roles of race, education and housing policy in the neighborhood experiences of families. She has collected qualitative data for a variety of neighborhood-based research projects in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, including the Gautreaux Two housing mobility program and Moving to Opportunity study. Through these projects, Melody has also trained and mentored students in the interview process and qualitative data analysis.

Melody is originally from Upstate NY and enjoys running and cooking, so she is looking forward to running along the Erie Canal and shopping at Wegmans! She tries to learn about the world by cooking a variety of cuisines, and is currently in the middle of a project to cook meals from 50 different countries.

Dr. Danielle Bessett, Lectures on Abortion Funding

By Eric Kaldor

Dr. Danielle Bessett, a sociologist at the University of Cincinnati, spoke on public funding of abortions as part of the American Democracy Project Speaker Series on March 22, 2012. The title of her talk was “Caught in Red Tape: Seeking Public Funding for an Abortion in Massachusetts.” While media attention has focused on whether public funds should be used to pay for abortions, most have ignored the experience of women with low-incomes in the states where public funding does cover abortions. In Massachusetts, health care reform provides access to subsidized health insurance for lower-income citizens and this insurance does cover abortion care. Bessett conducted a survey of women seeking abortions that met the qualifications to receive subsidized health insurance in Massachusetts and applied. She found a series of bureaucratic obstacles that caused these women significant distress. Out of the 39 women interviewed, two decided to continue their pregnancies. Thirty-six women terminated their pregnancies, but only 10 were covered by state-subsidized insurance. Some women reported bureaucratic delays in enrollment that often took several weeks and postponed abortions. Besides enrollment, maintaining their insurance status was a challenge. Sixteen women reported they had been bounced off of MassHealth previously for bureaucratic reasons (e.g. moving and not completing reactivation forms, changing student status). Policymakers in Massachusetts have used this research to identify and resolve bureaucratic problems.
SOC 352 Redesigned to Prepare Students for Careers

By Eric Kaldor

In fall 2011, Dr. Kaldor introduced a redesigned course, SOC 352: Work and Organizations, to help students think about their future careers and choose steps to start developing their career now.

Alongside traditional sociology content, the course emphasizes career exploration as a primary learning objective through a mix of readings and assignments. A key text for the course is Kerr Inkson's Understanding Careers, which offers an interdisciplinary perspective on what we mean by a career, how careers are changing in the global economy, and what we can learn from the careers of others. Students also complete four major assignments: career assessment tests, occupational earnings analysis for careers of interest, a career interview, and a 2-year career plan. SOC 352 students found these assignments useful with 44% ranking the career interview as most useful, followed by 33% that favored the career assessment tests. Student response to the career exploration component was overwhelmingly positive. More than 87% of students reported the course provided them with useful information for thinking about future careers and 85% reported that they had learned valuable strategies for developing their careers. The course will be offered again in fall 2012.

Sociology Job-Related Skills: An Important Element of Student Resumes

By Denise Copelton

Students majoring in sociology acquire many skills in their courses that are attractive to a wide array of employers. Today's best employers seek individuals with written and oral communication skills, an ability to work collectively and with culturally diverse audiences, data collection and analysis skills (including competence conducting interviews and surveys and analyzing the collected data), and familiarity with computer applications (including spreadsheets such as MS Excel, statistical packages like SPSS, geographic information systems like arcGIS, and qualitative analysis software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti). Other job-relevant skills acquired through sociology coursework include the ability to identify ethical issues in research, develop evidence-based arguments, evaluate different research methods, write a report understandable by non-specialists, form causal hypotheses, and use computer resources to develop a reference list.

While these skills are often acquired in sociology core courses, a recent study by the American Sociological Association reports that fewer than half of senior sociology majors included such job-relevant skills on their resumes. The results are based on the Bachelor's and Beyond survey, which interviewed a nationally representative sample of sociology majors who graduated in 2005 in their senior year and again two and four years later. While 69 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed that they learned to evaluate different research methods, not discuss it in job interviews. However, the students who did list sociological methods skills on their resumes and discussed them in job interviews were more likely to use those skills on the job and to report high levels of job satisfaction. In fact, those majors who singled out their skills with potential employers were more than twice as likely to use them on the job. The survey also found that although few respondents completed internships, or participated in community activities and service learning, those who did were significantly more likely to land jobs that were closely related to their major. The study also found that those who held jobs related to their sociology major were more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction.

Based on this research, students are well-advised to seek out internship and service learning opportunities while in school to better prepare for their eventual job search. Moreover, it is important for students to list specific job-related skills on their resume if they hope to secure jobs that are both related to sociology and offer high levels of job satisfaction. How does your resume stack up?

The full research report is available as: Spalter-Roth, Roberta, Mary Scheuer Senter, Pamela Stone, and Michael Wood. 2010. "ASA's Bachelor's and Beyond Survey: Findings and Their Implications for Students and Departments." Teaching Sociology 38(4): 314–329.
Each spring, sociology faculty, students, family and friends come together for The College at Brockport's annual induction ceremony for Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the International Sociological Honor Society established in 1915 to recognize and promote excellence in the study of sociology. Inductees are all junior or senior sociology majors at Brockport with grade point averages placing them in the top third of their class.

Spring 2011
On April 8, 2011 the Brockport chapter of AKD inducted Lauren Carson, Jenna Dota, Linda Gabbert, Rachel Gianforti, Danielle Hill, Peter Lista, Claire Lustumbo, Megan Marvin, Matthew McGrain, Kylie McLean, Lindsay Mion, Ashley Myers, Julia Southcott, and Kendra White. Professors Denise Copelton, Julie Ford, Amy Guptill, Eric Kaldor and Joan Spade conducted the initiation. Professor Emeritus Robert Rutzen and Professor Patricia Tweet were on hand to congratulate students during the reception following the formal induction ceremony. The event also included a keynote address by Professor Emeritus Ed Lehman on his research on the sociology of religion.

Spring 2012
The 2012 AKD ceremony was held on March 30. The following students were inducted: Juan Carlos Acosta, Elizabeth Deleon-Fox, Emily Geraci, Lisa Jones, Darren Kwiatkowski, Patrick Leavy, Michele Troup McGrath, Kaitlyn Spike, Molly Stanton and William Strassner. Professors Copelton, Ford, Kaldor, Spade, and Weininger participated in the induction ceremony. Stuart Mitchell, President and CEO of Pathstone Corporation, gave the keynote address. His talk focused on the development of his work and the work of Pathstone in the Rochester community.

2011 inductees pose with AKD banner.

Professor Emeritus Ed Lehman gives the 2011 AKD lecture.

2012 AKD Inductees
During the annual spring AKD induction ceremony, the Department of Sociology recognizes students for outstanding achievements. In spring 2011, Scott James was named Departmental Scholar. In addition to maintaining an outstanding grade point average, Scott interned with Professor Jeff Lashbrook in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at The College at Brockport. His research internship project examined religious concordance among students and their parents, and its impact on students’ political views and levels of open-mindedness.

Peter Lista and Kendra White received the 2011 Sociology Department Scholarship. Both recipients were also inducted into the sociology honor society.

In spring 2012, Peter Lista was named the Department Scholar. Peter plans to enter the PhD program in sociology at Indiana University in fall 2012.

Ashley McKay and Kaitlyn Spike received the 2012 Sociology Department Scholarship.

Congratulations Peter, Kendra, Ashley and Kaitlyn!

Each year, a handful of highly motivated sociology students work closely with faculty on collaborative research projects and independent studies. These projects permit students to sharpen and expand the skills acquired in their regular sociology coursework by undertaking original research or examining specific research questions in detail. Some students have used these projects to launch successful applications to graduate school in sociology and other related areas, or to explore further a facet of sociology that interests them. Several students have presented their research at regional sociology conferences or at Brockport Scholar's Day. Current sociology students interested in working with faculty on collaborative or independent research or independent studies should talk to their advisor or another faculty member to discover what opportunities currently exist in the department. Depending on the project and the work involved, students can potentially earn between 1-6 credits for these experiences.

For those wanting to pursue research in the summer months, the College has a limited number of Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowships available that offer room and board in a campus residence hall and a small stipend to support students' work. In summer 2011, Peter Lista ’12 and Brianna Sepulveda ’12 received fellowships to work with Dr. Eric Kaldor and Dr. Denise Copelton, respectively. Peter’s research with Dr. Kaldor examined community development financial institutions or CDFIs, focusing on how these organizations present accountability measures on their websites. Brianna's work with Dr. Copelton focused on gendered feeding work in families affected by celiac disease. Undergraduate Summer Research Fellowships are highly competitive and students must submit detailed applications early in the spring semester prior to the summer project. Acceptance of a fellowship requires that students present their research at a relevant conference off-campus such as a state or regional sociology meeting.
Sociology Students Present at Conferences

Brianna Sepulveda ’12 presented a co-authored paper with Dr. Denise Copelton at the annual conference of the Eastern Sociological Society in New York City. Brianna presented the results of her collaborative research with Dr. Copelton on gendered feeding work in families affected by celiac disease (CD) in a roundtable session. Families affected by CD tend to rely on a traditional gendered division of labor, with women providing the bulk of gluten-free feeding work. Adult men perform feeding work only when they are the family member with CD. Adult men also tend to focus their efforts on shopping rather than meal planning or cooking. Brianna was also one of two Brockport students selected to give a poster presentation on her research on CD at “Discovery: An Undergraduate Showcase,” an annual SUNY-wide undergraduate research conference in Albany, NY.

Peter Lista ’12 presented two co-authored papers with Dr. Eric Kaldor. He presented the first paper, entitled “Accountability Online: Conformity versus Adaptation,” at the annual New York State Sociological Association annual conference. It explored how Community Development Loan Funds (CDLFs) present accountability data on their websites at three different points in time: 2003, 2006, and 2009. The average number of combined measures presented by all CDLFs in the sample steadily increased from 2003 to 2009, but CDLFs that lent primarily to small businesses presented the most accountability measures overall. The second paper, entitled “Online Accountability: Projecting Trustworthiness on Community Development Loan Fund Websites” and presented at the Eastern Sociological Society annual conference in New York City used a larger sample of CDLFs to examine how accountability measures changed across four different time points. Quantitative measures (e.g., amount of money lent or number of houses built) decreased over time, while qualitative measures (e.g., case studies and organization histories) increased.

The following students participated in the annual Scholar’s Day conference at the College:

Juan Carlos Acosta ’12, “The Economic Co-optation and Betrayal of Feminism.”

Brianna Sepulveda ’12, “Feeding the Celiac Family: Medically-Restricted Diets & Gendered Feeding Work.”

Research Methods Students Conduct Field Research at Area Restaurants

By Denise Copelton

Students in Dr. Copelton’s fall 2011 Research Methods course completed field research at fast food restaurants. For two weeks, students observed early morning patrons’ activities and interactions at one of three area restaurants: McDonald’s, Burger King or Tim Hortons. The project was designed to give students first-hand experience with unobtrusive qualitative research. While some students were nervous about conducting original research, most were excited to begin. Kylie McLean ’12, who observed at Tim Hortons, explained, “To me, a research methods class is the culmination of one’s sociology undergraduate career. I was extremely excited to start my observations in the field and to be able to put my research knowledge to work.” Students wrote comprehensive field notes, which they shared with one another, and then individually analyzed the results. Each student conducted a literature review on sociability in public settings and wrote a final research report linking their observations to prior research. Students remarked that actually conducting their own research and visiting the field sites made the process of writing a research report much more interesting.

Ms. McLean noted, “The most important finding from my analysis of the field notes was that many people who frequent fast-food restaurants do so as a way of getting away from the everyday craziness that life entails. It was a way to separate themselves from their work lives and their family lives, to meet with friends who ultimately did it for the same reasons as them.”

Arnett Barnes ’12 agreed, explaining, “My view of why people went to fast food restaurants changed after completing my observations… People socialized in these settings for different reasons and a lot of times it was not about the food. Friendships were formed and people looked forward to socializing.”

McLean offered the following advice to future student researchers: “Take the observations seriously, yet have some fun with it. The research process can be daunting and overwhelming at first, but can turn into an interesting and exciting experience.”
**ALUMNI NEWS**

We want your name here, too! Email us at Sociology@brockport.edu to let us know about your recent professional and personal accomplishments. Be sure to include your full name and graduation year so we can include this in our next newsletter.

**Jessica Callea ’09** earned a Master’s degree in Applied Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

**Juan Castañeda ’09** earned a Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology at the University of Houston, where he also is pursuing a PhD. After he graduates in 2015, he hopes to pursue a post-doc in health psychology to become more involved in research pertaining to health disparities in underrepresented populations. Juan has been involved in numerous research studies in the areas of public health, social justice education, cognitive and career assessment psychometrics, and program evaluation. One study examined the relationship of Vietnamese mothers’ cultural/social attitudes and their likelihood of acquiring the human papilloma virus vaccination for their daughters. Another study evaluated the outcome of a competency restoration program for individuals with schizophrenia, and assessed the psychometric properties of two types of brief cognitive measures for use with this population.

**Joanne Fogarty ’07** recently earned a Master’s of Public Administration in Public Economics and Policy Process and Political Institutions from Rockefeller College at the University at Albany. She works as a Fiscal Analyst at the NYS Assembly Minority Ways and Means Committee doing tax policy and economic and revenue forecasting.

**Hulando Howard ’07** earned a Master’s degree in Public Administration at The College at Brockport.

**Scott James ’11** is a student in the University of Iowa PhD program in sociology, where he is studying the sociology of education.

**Ryan Kolb ’06** got married in July 2010 and now lives in the metropolitan DC area of Northern Virginia. He is a Patrol Officer First Class with the Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia.

**Claire Lustumbo ’11** is attending Nazareth College for a Master’s degree in Education and works as a graduate assistant in the Department of Women’s Studies.

**Kristy Martin ’11** works as a nurse at Unity Hospital in Greece and lives in Hamlin, NY.

**Janet L. Pirozzi ’69** retired from her position as Information Technology Project Manager and IT Quality Assurance Manager for the State of Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation. Upon her retirement, she founded the North Valleys Activities Group, a walking and social club with over 70 members.

**Riley Schillaci ’06** lives in Cody, Wyoming and is a professional sword swallow and sideshow performer. She was recently a featured contestant on the television show “America’s Got Talent.”

**Lia Scully ’06** is TBI/NHTD Service Coordinator at Venture Forthe, Inc. She is currently completing graduate work at Medaille College in the Licensed Mental Health Counseling program.

**Aaron Skinner ’01** is a successful working actor in Hollywood. He has appeared in numerous commercials, episodes of “The Mentalist” and “The Shield,” and films like “Few Options,” “All Bad” and “The Smell of Success” (with Billy Bob Thornton).

**Joanne Tompkins ’06** completed a Master’s degree in Health Science with a concentration in Community Health Education at The College at Brockport.

**Pina Valle ’06** successfully defended her dissertation proposal and was granted “All But Dissertation” or ABD status in sociology at Florida State University. She plans to graduate with her PhD in spring 2013.

**Dr. Joanne Cepelak** joined the department as a visiting instructor teaching both Introduction to Sociology and Social Problems.

**Dr. Denise Copelton** was recently granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. She will be on sabbatical in fall 2012 to work on her book on celiac disease.

**Dr. Amy Guptill** was on sabbatical for academic year 2011-12. During this time she completed an online graduate certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for computerized map-making and spatial analysis, which she is incorporating into both her teaching and her research on food and agriculture systems.

**Dr. Elliot Weininger** was on sabbatical in fall 2011, during which time he worked on three papers. Two, co-authored with Annette Lareau of the University of Pennsylvania, deal with social class differences in how children’s out-of-school time is occupied. The third, growing out of an interest in the role that schools play in families’ residential decision-making, analyzes differences and similarities in the public relations efforts of a set of school districts serving widely differing communities.
Established in 2004, the Sociology Department Scholarship provides an annual monetary award to two junior sociology students to defray tuition and other academic expenses during his or her senior year at The College at Brockport. This award is made possible by the generous combined contributions of alumni, faculty, and friends of the department, as well as matching corporate donations. Please consider the Sociology Department Scholarship Fund in your giving plans. In these challenging times, your generous support can help sustain and further the monetary share to awardees, while matching corporate donations can significantly expand the dollar amount given. Contributions to The College at Brockport annual giving campaign can be designated to the Sociology Department Scholarship. Even small contributions help.

Visit [www.brockport.edu/giving](http://www.brockport.edu/giving) or contact the Office of Alumni Relations and Development at (585) 395-2451.

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