THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO RISE NATIONALLY

“. . . It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . .”

Everyone around the country is feeling this one. But we have had a terrific year, despite the effects of the economic downturn. We have continued our rise in the national rankings: The Department was ranked 56th in the nation by US News and World Report, up from 57th place last year and 58th the year before.

The Department has also received the Sociologists for Women in Society’s (SWS) Seal of Excellence for gender equity and scholarship. Only 29 doctoral granting institutions nationally received this award, and the Department was among 18 of the 60 most prestigious doctoral programs in the nation to be so awarded.

We have doubled the amount of external grant money we bring in, and the number of faculty bringing in that money has increased significantly. And we have seen a strong rise in published research. That scholarship includes an increase in coauthored work between faculty and graduate students, a lovely indicator of an increasingly robust mentoring system.

And in spite of the budget restrictions everyone around the nation is feeling, we were able to recruit a very strong and impressive incoming graduate cohort. We are looking forward to continuing to build on these strengths in the coming years. Stay tuned. . .

SCHOLARSHIP: BOOKS


Anjana Narayan (PhD 2006) and Bandana Purkayastha, Living Our Religions: South Asian Hindu and Muslim Women Narrate Their Experiences. Bloomfield: Kumarian Press.


Deric Shannon (co- editor ), Contemporary Anarchists Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy (Routledge).

Arnold Dashefsky and Bernard Lazewitz, Charitable Choices: Philanthropic Decisions of Donors in the American Jewish Community.

Gaye Tuchman, Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University (University of Chicago Press).

Scott Barclay, Mary Bernstein, and Anna Marie Marshall (eds.), Queer Mobilizations: LGBT Activists Confront the Law (NYU Press).

Nancy Naples and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz (eds.), The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men, by Lionel Cantu (NYU Press).

Clint Sanders (ed.), Between the Species: Readings in Human-Animal Interaction (Allyn-Bacon).

Katie Acosta, “Lesbians in the Borderlands: Shifting Identities and Imagined Communities.” In Gender & Society.


Maya Beasley wrote a white paper on counterterrorism for the Department of Defense. The paper was sponsored by the Joint Staff J3, Strategic Global Innovation and Strategy Center and Office of the Secretary of Defense Department of Development Research and Engineering, and written in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security and Air force Research Laboratory as part of a “strategic multilayer assessment project.”


Andrew Deener, “The ‘Black Section’ of the Neighborhood: Collective Visibility and Collective Invisibility as Sources of Place Identity.” In Ethnography.


Rebecca Willman, “Coming Out When You’re Not Really In: Coming Out as a Teachable Moment.” In Feminism & Psychology.


Michael Wallace, Andrew Fullerton (PhD, 2007), and Mustafa Gurbuz, “Union Organizing Effort and Success in the US, 1948-2004.” In Research in Social Stratification and Mobility.


Maura Kelly, “Women’s Voluntary Childlessness: A Radical Rejection of Motherhood?” In Women’s Studies Quarterly.

Maura Kelly, Virginity Loss Narratives in ‘Teen Drama’ Television Programs.” In Journal of Sex Research.


Claudio Benzecry, “Becoming a Fan: On the Seductions of Opera.” Qualitative Sociology.

Kim Price, “Caring Labour, Intersectionality, and Worker Satisfaction: An Analysis of the National Nursing Assistant Study (NNAS)”. Sociology of Health and Illness.


SCHOLARSHIP: ARTICLES IN EDITED COLLECTIONS


Deric Shannon, “As Beautiful as a Brick Through a Bank Window’: Anarchism, the Academy, and Resisting Domestication,” in Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy.


RESEARCH GRANTS

The department’s grant funding totaled more than a half million dollars:

Maya Beasley was awarded a Department of Defense grant of $250,000 for her work on counterterrorism.

Nancy Naples and Mary Bernstein were awarded a major NSF grant ($162k) for their project, “Family Policy, Social Movements, and the Law.”

Arnie Dashefsky’s grant for the Jewish Data Base continued this year.

Mary Fischer received a grant of nearly $35,000 from AERA (American Educational Research Association).

Bob Broadhead received an NIH grant of $110,000 to continue his research on HIV prevention.

Claudio Benzecry was awarded a Small Faculty Grant from the UConn Research Foundation for “The Operatic Fanatic: Sociology of an Obsession.”

Mary Bernstein was awarded a Small Faculty Grant from the UConn Research Foundation to complete her edited collection, Queer Mobilizations: LGBT Activists Confront the Law (NYU Press).
Lisa Bogardus presented her work at the 26th Annual Qualitative Analysis Conference in Waterloo, Canada.

Thirteen faculty members and eight graduate students presented papers or served on panels at the ASA conference in Boston this year. Among the faculty were Mary Bernstein, Simon Cheng, Jim Defronzo, Anita Garey, Davita Silfen Glasberg, Phoebe Godfrey, Amanda Moras, Kim Price, Bandana Purkayastha, Ruth Simpson, Lisa Troyer, Michael Wallace, David Weakliem, and Brad Wright. The graduate students were Gordon Gauchat, Jungyun Gill, Jamie Gusrang, Tom Hochschild, Maura Kelly, Shweta Majumdar, Tom Volscho, and Christine Zozula.

The department was well-represented at the SWS conference in Savannah in February. Bandana Purkayastha (Deputy Editor of Gender & Society) and Manisha Desai (Director of Women’s Studies) attended with 6 of our graduate students. Ranita Ray and Rebecca Willman each presented papers. Chandra Waring and Angie Bee- man attended as part of their SWS Award. Also attending were Sergio Mobilia and Barret Katuna. Sergio, Barret, and Ranita will now serve on the International Committee; Barret will serve on the UN Subcommittee; and Chandra and Angie will serve on the Sister-to-Sister Task Force.

Sixteen graduate students and four faculty members presented papers or served on panels at UConn’s 21st Annual Conference on Women and Gender, “Ecofeminism in a Transnational World.” The faculty were Manisha Desai, Phoebe Godfrey, Nancy Naples, and Bandana Purkayastha. The graduate students were Mary Burke, Gordon Gauchat, Dina Giovanelli, Barbara Gurr, Jamie Gusrang, Miho Iwata, Maura Kelly, Shweta Majumdar, Nikki McGary, Jayme Schwartzman, Deric Shannon, and Rebecca Willman.

Four faculty and seven graduate students presented papers or served on panels at the annual meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society in Baltimore. The faculty were Maya Beasley, Anita Garey, Davita Silfen Glasberg, Amanda Moras, and Michael Wallace. The graduate students were Katie Acosta, Medora Barnes, Ayanna Bledsoe, Gordon Gauchat, Rachel Leventhal-Weiner, Lwendo Moonzwe, and Lauren Sardi Ross.
Bob Broadhead presented his work with Alexandra Dtsenko on HIV intervention projects at the 20th Annual Intervention Conference on the Reduction of Drug-Related Harm, Bangkok, Thailand. He also presented his work with Oksana Matiyash, Luidmyla Shulga, Pavlo Smyrnov, Valerii L. Volkanevsky, Gordon Gauchat, and Casey Borch (PhD 2007) at the 5th European Conference on Clinical Social Research on AIDS and Drugs, Vilnius, Lithuania.


Arnie Dashefsky presented his paper, “Crossing Boundaries and Jewish Journeys: Interfaith Marriage in the US” at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Religion. He also presented his paper, “The Distancing Hypothesis Reassessed: Israel Attachments in Local Community Studies” at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies.

Andrew Deener presented his paper, “Sanctifying Neighborhood Identity: Oakwood as a ‘Black Neighborhood’” at the Yale University’s Urban Ethnography Conference.

Susan Eisenhandler presented her paper, “Yes, in My Backyard—A Buddhist Temple Moves into the Neighborhood: Responses from Residents of a Retirement Community” at the Gerontological Society of America.

Christine Zozula presented her work at the SUNY-Stony Brook 6th Annual Student Ethnography Conference.

Nancy Naples presented her Presidential Address, “Crossing Borders: Community Activism, Globalization, and Social Justice,” at the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. She also gave an invited lecture, “Women’s Activism and Globalization,’ at St. John’s University, and “Women’s Community Based Activism and Globalization,” at the Center for Urban and Global Studies at Trinity College.


Clint Sanders presented his paper, “Conducting and Living with a Tattoo Ethnography” at the annual meetings of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, Boston.

David Weakliem presented a paper at the Workshop on Social Divisions and Political Choices at Nuffield College, Oxford.

Andrew Deener was an invited commentator at the SUNY-Stony Brook 6th Annual Student Ethnography Conference.

Christine Zozula presented her work at the SUNY-Stony Brook 6th Annual Student Ethnography Conference.
**FACULTY AWARDS**

Nancy Naples received the UConn Alumni Association Faculty Excellence Award in Research (Humanities/Social Sciences).  

Clint Sanders was accepted as a member of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.  

Davita Silfen Glasberg was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, the nation’s oldest national honor society.

Claudio Benzecry was nominated to be a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University.  

Ingrid Semaan was recognized for Excellence in Program Development in Women’s Studies at the International Conference on Girls at Southern Connecticut State University.  

Bandana Purkayastha received the Graduate Students’ Faculty Mentoring Award. This is a student-initiated and student-run award given to the faculty member they believe provided the best professional mentoring for them. It is the second such award to Bandana. Clearly she is highly valued by the graduate students!

**GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS**

Gordon Gauchat and Mustafa Gurbuz were co-recipients of the Outstanding Graduate Student Award.  

Lauren Sardi Ross received the Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award.  

Lisa Bogardus received the Ron Taylor Award for her paper, “The Bolt Wars: Defining Cultural Norms in the Social World of Rock Climbing.”  

Angie Beeman received the Women’s Studies Teaching Excellence Award.  

Chandra Waring received the Hogan Graduate Summer Research Award.  

Dina Giovanelli received the 100 Years of Women Scholarship Award from the Women’s Center.  

Chandra Waring and Angie Beeman received Minority Graduate Student Scholarships for the SWS conference.  

Angie Beeman received the Racial/Ethnic Minorities Graduate Scholar Award given by the Society for the Study of Social Problems.  

Eight undergraduate majors were initiated into Phi Beta Kappa: Nicholas B. Arnsten, John Christopher Bailey, Christopher Michael Donnelly (who will be joining us in the Fall as a graduate student), Joshua James Faucher, Laura Lynne Gasiorek, Samantha Grayeck, Lindsey Rachel Itzkowitz, and Megan Mary Vena. Well done and kudos to all!

**UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS**

The Janet M. Fierberg Scholarship Award winners this year were Christopher Donnelly, Mia Freedenfeld, and Stephanie Jacobs (Social Work).
ALUMNI AND EMERITI ACTIVITIES

Nechama Tec’s book, Defiance, was featured in a Daily Campus article discussing the book’s transference to the screen in a feature film starring Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber, and Jamie Bell. The book documents the story of the largest armed rescue of Jews during the Holocaust.

Prof. Florence Maatita (PhD 2003) was granted tenure and promoted to Assoc. Prof. at Southern Illinois University -Edwardsville.

Beth Merenstein-Frankel (PhD 2004) was granted tenure and promoted to Assoc. Prof. at Central Connecticut State University.

Ken Neubeck participated in an Economic Justice Workshop hosted by the UConn Human Rights Institute. He currently lives in Eugene, Oregon, working as a Human Rights activist.

Steve Harvey (MA) is now in Law School at the University of Colorado, and interned at Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network. He has published his first sociologically-inspired novel, A Conspiracy of Wizards.

Gaye Tuchman was appointed to the Faculty Standards Committee of the University Senate.

Kay Ratcliff and Davita Silfen Glasberg were appointed to the Advisory Committee for the University of Connecticut Undergraduate Public Health Initiative.

Davita Silfen Glasberg has been appointed to the Provost’s Commission on the Status of Women, and serves on the Family Roles Subcommittee.

Ken Ratcliff was elected to the Faculty Senate and serves on the Chair of the Senate’s Standing Committee for Student Welfare.

Mike Wallace was a panelist at the CLAS first Interdisciplinary Forum on Poverty and Economic Inequality. Davita Silfen Glasberg chaired the forum.

Gaye Tuchman has been appointed to the Diversity Committee of the University Senate.

Clint Sanders was a panelist at the CLAS third Interdisciplinary Forum on Studies in Popular Culture.

Davita Silfen Glasberg and Off Yer Rockers performed at the Stamford Campus Town Hall Meeting and Presentation of Stamford Campus Awards and at UConn Coop for their annual fundraiser for the Covenant Soup Kitchen.

AROUND UCONN

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AROUND THE DISCIPLINE

Mary Fischer was elected to the Council of the Community and Urban Sociology Section of the ASA.

Gaye Tuchman was invited to contribute to the SSRC web site on the implications of the demise of newspapers for democracy.

Claudio Benzecry has been appointed a member of the Editorial Board of Qualitative Sociology.

Barret Katuna serves as an SWS Representative to the United Nations, and on the SWS Discrimination Committee.

Mary Bernstein was elected Council Member of the Collective Behavior and Social Movement and the Sexualities Sections of the ASA.

Manisha Desai was elected to the American Sociological Association’s Committee on Nominations.

DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

There was much to celebrate at the end of the year! Here (in foreground) Nya Stevens and Danielle Livernois (graduating undergrad assistant) share some food and levity. Behind them (left to right) are Katie Acosta, Annie Scola Wisnensky, Clint Sanders, Chandra Waring, Maura Kelly, Dina Giovanelli, and Travis Lowe.

Newly-minted Dr. Katie Acosta receives a gift to remember us by as she leaves for her new tenure-track position at Tulane University. Don’t forget us, Katie!

Noel Cazenave, Chair of the Awards Committee, announced the Fierberg Scholarship Awards winners at the Department End of Year Celebration.
IN THE NEWS

Susan Eisenhandler was interviewed in the Hartford Courant about a survey project concerning what people would say if they could speak with the church. The survey was done by the North American Mission Board.

Mary Bernstein was interviewed in the Hartford Courant about Connecticut’s new law legalizing same-sex marriages. She was also featured in an article in the Colombian newspaper, El Espectador.

Mary Fischer was featured in a UConn Advance article about her research on the benefits for students of racial diversity on college campuses.

Bob Broadhead was featured in UConn Advance and Daily Campus articles about his research in AIDS prevention programs in Russia and Southeast Asia.

Bandana Purkayastha appeared on NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams. She was interviewed on a piece on cross-cultural love.

Angie Beeman and Chandra Waring were featured in an article on biracial identity in the Huffington Post.

Mustafa Gurbuz (MA 2008) was interviewed on EBRU TV (a nationwide channel) on the similarities between the Gandhi and Gulen movements.

Arnie Dashefsky’s research on Jewish/Christian interfaith marriages was featured in an article in the UConn Advance.

Bandana Purkayastha’s new book with Anjana Narayan (PhD, 2006), Living Our Religions, was featured in an article in The Advance.

Davita Silfen Glasberg was quoted in an article in the Republican American on young voters in the presidential election.

Claudio Benzecry’s work on opera fans was featured in a Reuters article that was picked up by more than two dozen media outlets around the world, including the US, Australia, Canada, China, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, UK, Italy, India, Brazil, and Romania.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Bandana Purkayastha was a panelist for the Connecticut Department of Health on Racial Health Disparities: Improving Data Gathering Procedures, at the Legislative Building.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: LIFE EVENTS AND DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES

New Faculty Arrivals, Tenure, and Promotions

Prof. Andrew Deener joined the department as an Assistant Professor. He specializes in Urban and Community Sociology. Welcome to the Department!

Prof. Simon Cheng was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. Congratulations, Simon. Well done!

Prof. Ron Taylor has stepped down as Vice Provost of Multicultural Affairs and is returning to the Sociology Department faculty. We warmly welcome Ron back to the department after a stupendous job at OMIA!

Happy Anniversary at UConn

Kay Ratcliff, 25 years

Davita Silfen Glasberg, 20 years

Brad Wright, 10 years
Changing Faces

Mary Bernstein finished her second term as Director of Graduate Studies, which completed her full appointment in that position. She has done a superb job steering the program through tough economic times and challenging programmatic changes. Under her direction, the graduate program has grown and become more rigorous and the student body more diverse and academically impressive. The department has flourished with her direction of the program. Thank you, Mary, for your commitment and excellent job. We wish you the best as you now turn your considerable intellectual energies on your NSF grant with Nancy Naples!

Please welcome the new incoming Director of Graduate Studies, Bandana Purkayastha. It was clear that Bandana was up to the job in the year she served as Acting DGS while Mary was on research sabbatical in Australia. After careful consultation with the graduate students and the faculty, Bandana emerged as the clear candidate to take on the challenge of the new DGS. We are confident that she will do a tremendous job.

Graduations and New Jobs

New Jobs
Katie Acosta, Tulane University
Medora Barnes, John Carroll University
Tom Volscho, CUNY-State Island College

Completed MAs
Michale McFarland
Sarah Medina
Miho Iwata
Sicelo Makepela
Ayanna Bledsoe
Justin Goodman
Latisha Nielsen
Jayme Schwartzman
Travis Lowe
Lisa Bogardus
Rachel Leventhal-Weiner
Krysten Brown
Lwendo Moonzwe

Completed PhDs
Tim Stablein
Katie Acosta
Tom Volscho

2009 INCOMING GRADUATE PROGRAM COHORT

Christopher Donnelly, BA University of Connecticut (Political Science and Sociology). Christopher has been awarded a UConn New England Scholar Award and the Janet M. Fierberg Award, and has been inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Pi Sigma Alpha National Honor Societies. He’s interested in Sociology of Crime and Deviance, Social Theory, and Political Sociology.

Rodrigo Figueroa Valenzuela, MA, Universidad Catolica del Peru (Economics and Sociology), BA Universidad de Chile (Sociology). Rodrigo is a Fulbright Award winner, and is currently a Professor and researcher at the University of Chile Santiago. His interest is in Economic Sociology.

John Fournier, BA Eastern Connecticut State University (Sociology). John was an Honors student and a research assistant at Eastern. He has presented a paper with Prof. William Lugo at the SSSP conference in Boston.

Allen Hyde, BA University of Alabama Birmingham (Sociology and History). Allen was a Sociology Honors student, and received the UAB Department of Sociology Undergraduate Research Award and the UAB Department of History’s Outstanding Student Award. He has presented his work at the Southern Sociology Society’s annual conference. His interests are Society and Communities, Political Sociology, Social Theory, and Inequality and Stratification.
Elizabeth McBride, BA Connecticut College (Sociology). Elizabeth has received the Ruby Jo Reeves Kennedy Memorial Award, the Charles “Bud” Church Teaching Ward for Social Justice, and the Doug Feeney Memorial Award. She was an invited speaker at two symposia. Her interests are Labor Studies and White Working Class Studies.

Malaena Taylor, BA University of California-Santa Barbara (Women’s Studies). Malaena has been awarded an Outstanding Scholar Award from UConn’s Graduate School. She was an Honors student at UC-SB. Her interests are Culture, Work, and Sex and Gender.

Alex Thompson, BS, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse (Sociology). Alex was a Sociology Honors student, winner of the Undergraduate Student Paper Competition of the Wisconsin Sociological Association, and a member of Eta Phi Alpha Honors Society, Alpha Kappa Delta International Honors Society, and the Golden Key Honors Society. His interests are Socialization, Deviance, and Identity.

Please welcome this impressive incoming cohort. They are our newest addition to a strong and rising program. They are certain to fit right in!

New Family Additions

Sadie Annabelle Weiner was born on March 9, 2009. Her delighted parents are Rachel Leventhal-Weiner and David Weiner.

Rowan Paige Seale was born on March 25, 2009. Her proud parents are Mary Fischer and Sid Seale.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD SADIE AND ROWAN!

We wish to extend our warmest and most sincere thanks to Arlene Goodwin and Kathy Covey, without whom we could not have survived this most trying year. While we are fully aware that the economic crisis has hit everyone around the country quite hard, that was small comfort while we struggled to adapt to a frozen and shrinking budget. But Arlene, our Resident Budget Maven, tirelessly worked her amazing magic to help us to craft a workable and useful budget—no small feat! She has always kept us from over-spending our budget, a huge asset in this critical time. She stayed two steps ahead of all of us in staying current in the moving targets that are bureaucratic rules at UConn and Federal and State laws. Her efforts prevented many of us from making terrible mistakes in paperwork (State, Federal, and UConn, all in triplicate!) crucial to our research, travel, and employment, in spite of our best efforts to thwart her from doing so! And all the while maintaining good cheer and sanity. Kathy, our intrepid Program Assistant, performed wondrously as she developed and improved spread sheets to track our students, both undergraduate and graduate, through the programs. That information was indispensable to our ability to function.

Both Arlene and Kathy were vital in the Herculean task of gathering crucial data for the mass of reports and proposals we needed to make to justify our share of the budget pool. We could not have succeeded without them. Arlene and Kathy, we don’t say it nearly often enough, but we greatly appreciate both of you, and we would be utterly lost without you!