Department of Sociology Newsletter
Vol. 5 - 2012

Three of our faculty members were elected Presidents of our professional organizations in 2011-2012!

Davita Silfen Glasberg is serving as the President of Sociologists Without Borders –US chapter. Sociologists Without Borders (SWB) is an international network of human rights scholars and activists. Along with the human rights section of the American Sociological Association, SWB continues to serve as the foremost platform for the rapidly growing scholarship on human rights within our discipline. Nancy Naples is serving as the President of Eastern Sociological Society (ESS), a pre-eminent regional sociological association founded in 1930. In her capacity as President, Nancy is organizing the 2013 ESS conference on Sustainable Communities/Sustainable Lives: Social Change, Social Action, & Social Justice. Bandana Purkayastha is President Elect of Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS); she becomes the President in February 2013. SWS, which started in 1969, has an illustrious record of breaking glass ceilings for women in academia and for bringing feminist

Claudio Benzecry’s book The Opera Fanatic has won the ASA Mary Douglas Award (ASA Culture section’s best book award) for 2012. Congratulations Claudio!
Mary Bernstein has received a grant from ASA’s Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline for her project “Crossing Boundaries.” She also continues to serve as a Deputy Editor for Gender & Society, the 4th ranked Sociology journal in Sociology and first ranked for Women’s Studies.

David Weakliem has become the Editor of Comparative Sociology, an international journal dedicated to advancing comparative sociological analyses of societies and cultures, institutions and organizations, groups and collectivities, networks and interactions.

Bandana Purkayastha was awarded the 2012 Faculty Mentoring Award, which is determined solely by graduate students. This is the third time she has received this award, honored also in 2006 and 2009.

PhD student Barret Katuna wrote enthusiastically in support: “Dr. Bandana Purkayastha embodies the type of scholar and mentor that I hope to be to other aspiring scholars. Throughout the past four years of my graduate work, she has served as an outstanding mentor both inside and outside of the classroom. Overall, my relationship with Bandana is academically, intellectually, and socially stimulating. Bandana should get the lifetime mentorship award because she is truly amazing! I honestly would not be where I am at in terms of publications without her guidance.”

Professor Clint Sanders, who retired last year, was awarded the 2011 George Herbert Mead Lifetime Achievement Award last year. The Society for the Study of Symbolic Interactionism (SSSI) George Herbert Mead Award represents outstanding contributions in scholarship, service to SSSI, an enduring faith in the principles of symbolic interaction, and a career’s worth of commitment to putting such faith into practice. Recipients of the Mead Award have extended and improved upon the foundations established by Mead, showing that what interactionists write and teach not only informs humans, but also improves the human condition.

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Congratulations to Noel Cazenave, who was promoted to Full Professor, and Maya Beasley, who was promoted to Associate Professor!
Editorships

Mary Bernstein, Deputy Editor, Gender & Society

Claudio Benzecry, Associate Editor, Apuntes de Investigacion del CECYP

David Weakliem, Editor, Comparative Sociology

Margaret Abraham and Bandana Purkayastha (Guest Editors), Special Issue on Linking Research to Activism, Current Sociology.

Series Editorships


Bandana Purkayastha, Frontpage Publications.

Panel Reviewer

Bandana Purkayastha, National Endowment for the Humanities

Peer Review/grants

Nancy Naples, National Endowment for the Humanities

Richard Rockwell, Panel Reviewer, National Science Foundation

Officer & Committee Work

Claudio Benzecry and Andrew Deener: ASA Culture section Newsletter Editors, with Allen Hyde and Trisha Tiamzon, Student Editors

Mary Bernstein: Publications Committee, Society for the Study of Social Problems; Treasurer ASA Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements

Manisha Desai: ASA Human Rights section Council member; Officer, Treasurer Thematic Group on Human Rights and Global Justice, International Sociological Association; Regional Representative, Research Committee on Gender, International Sociological Association

Bandana Purkayastha: Vice President, International Sociological Society-RC-01;

Secretary, International Sociological Association-RC-32; ASA Asia and Asian American section Council member; ASA Jessie Bernard Award Committee member

International Engagements

Arnie Dashefsky was recently informed that he was nominated to serve as part of the Distinguished Lectureship Program of the Association of Jewish Studies, an international association of 1,850 members. He is one of three sociologists selected on the panel of 60.

Manisha Desai returned from year-long field work in India. Manisha was one of the 19 American receipts of Fulbright Hays fellowships for 2011. Her research focused on three protest movements within contemporary neo-liberal transformations in India. She is currently collating her data on the Mahuva Movement (a movement to protect water, land and forests as common resources of people) and two others -- the Macchimar Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti (MASS, Committee for the Struggle for Fisherfolks’ Rights) and Par-Puma Adivasi Sangh (Collective of Indigenous People from Par-Puma Rivers).

Bandana Purkayastha was invited to serve on the international expert group for Presidency University, Kolkata India. This group provides inputs for the future directions of the institutions, including the current group of hires. She is one of twelve expert group members from the US. Presidency College was founded in 1817 as the first Western-type educational institution in Asia. As one of the preeminent centers of learning in India for nearly two centuries, the college was granted university status in 2010.

Bandana also delivered a colloquium, “A Sociology of Human Rights,” at the University of Calcutta in April 2012.

Richard Rockwell was the only representative from North America to serve on the panel for an interagency, international grant competition called Digging into Data (DiD) on behalf of the National Science Foundation. The NSF is one of 8 agencies participating in this competition (the others are listed on the DiD web site: http://www.diggingintodata.org/).

The panel met in London in September 2011. Their report is: CLIR Releases Report About Digging into Data Challenge

Gaye Tuchman was an invited panelist for a Discussion on the Humanities and Liberal Arts in 21st Century Higher Education. This symposium took place in Florence, Italy, November 10-12, 2011, organized by The John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress, the Humanities Initiative at NYU, and the James Madison Project at Princeton University.

Gaye was also the keynote speaker at a special workshop in Haifa, Israel on “What is Newsworthy? Reexamining News Criteria.” Gaye’s topic was The Business of News: Accountability Regimes and Ideological Institutions.

Simon Hsu-Chih Cheng, “The Effects of Internet Use on Adolescents’ First Romantic and Sexual Relationships in Taiwan.” The Fourth Conference of Taiwan Youth Project.

National Engagements

Claudio Benzecry has been invited to be part of the editorial board of the newly formed American Journal of Cultural Sociology. He also gave a talk and taught a workshop at Brown for the Mellon Graduate Workshop on Knowledge, Politics, and Identity on March 16. In April he toured California, giving talks at UC Santa Cruz and US Davis Sociology Colloquia. He also presented a paper at the New School on memory and art.

During her service as SWS Distinguished Feminist Lecturer, Nancy Naples gave talks on discursive politics, social justice, and feminist praxis at Ohio University and Cal State University-Dominguez Hills and sexual citizenship and reproductive rights at Rice University.


Gaye Tuchman had an opinion piece in Insidehighered.com (“Commodifying the Academic Self”).

Gordon Gauchat’s (PhD, 2011) ASR article, “ POLITICOIZATION OF SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE,” has received coverage from many news outlets, including MSNBC, Slate, and the Los Angeles Times, among others.

Maya Beasley’s new book Opting Out: Losing the Potential of America’s Young Black Elite has received coverage in the popular press, in newspapers and on the internet and radio.

Claudio Benzecry has given interviews on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and several Spanish-language radio and newspapers.

Arnold Dashefsky’s work on Jewish communities was featured on the UConn CLAS Today blog and quoted in two online articles on the current size of the US Jewish population.

Noel Cazenave wrote an op-ed in the Hartford Courant in March 2012.

Bandana Purkayastha, Khabar 365 Din, op-ed in Bengali, January 2012.

Bradley Wright, “The ‘War’ on Religion: A Closer Look at What America Really Thinks about Christians,” in Relevant Magazine. He also wrote the cover story for Christianity Today, “They Like You: What Americans Really Think about Evangelicals and Why We Worry About It.”

Public Engagement

Susan Eisenhandler: Board of Directors HUD residential complex for the elderly

Noel Cazenave: Everyday Democracy (everyday-democracy.org)

Jeremy Pais: Provides data on CT poverty to the Hearst Newspaper Group.

Kathryn Ratcliff: Board Member, Eastern CT Area Health Education Center.

Bradley Wright gave a speaking series on religion at St. James Church in Glastonbury, CT; an invited lecture at Biola University; the Fleer lecture at Central Methodist University; and was convocation speak at Gordon College.


Claudio Benzecry’s book The Opera Fanatic has been translated into Spanish. The publisher Siglo XXI will distribute it in Buenos Aires, Mexico, and Barcelona. The Craft of Ethnography workshop (based at Columbia, CUNY GC, NSSR, Princeton, and NYU) gave a reception at ESS for Claudio’s book on February 24.

Mary Bernstein’s edited book (co-edited with Verta Taylor) (Not) The Marrying Kind: The Politics of Same Sex Marriage has received a contract from the University of Minnesota Press and is about ready to go into production. She has two chapters in this book, including one with former graduate student Mary Burke (PhD, 2011) and another chapter with Verta Taylor. Current graduate student Kristine Olsen also has a chapter in this book.


Bradley R. E. Wright’s Upside: Surprising Good News about the State of the World (Bethany House [a division of Baker Publishing]) presents social and economic trends in the United State and world, using data collected from the US Census, United Nations, and numerous other sources. Brad has been interviewed on the Research on Religion podcast as well as several dozen other radio and TV shows.

Book Chapters


Journal Articles


Claudio Benzecry, “A Night at the Opera. How does taste become a passion?” in Contexts.


Deric Shannon (PhD, 2011), M., Heckert, J., Abbey S. Willis.

“Loving and Teaching: Some Notes on Queering Anarchist Pedagogies,” in Educational Studies.


Mary Bernstein: Crossing Boundaries. American Sociological Association, Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline

Arnold Dashefsky: Distinguished Lectureship Program; Mandell L. Berman Institute - North American Jewish Data Bank (Jewish Federations of North America); Judaic Studies Program Development (Jewish Federations of Connecticut)

Andrew Deener: Completed third year of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellowship

Manisha Desai: Completed Fulbright Hays Fellowship (one of 19 granted in the US)

Other Publications


Gaye Tuchman, “Pressured and Measured: Professors at Wannabe U,” in The Hedgehog Review, which is a publication of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. It has published essays by such sociologists as Richard Sennett, Arlie Hochschild, Zygmunt Baumann, Viviana Zelizer, and Craig Calhoun.


“The Escalation of Business as Usual,” Academe.


Adams, J. P. and David L. Weakliem, “From Unpublished Paper to Citation Classic: August B. Hollingshead’s Four-Factor Index of Social Status,” in Yale Journal of Sociology.

Due to the efforts of Claudio Benzecry and Gaye Tuchman, we were able to attract a galaxy of top scholars to our colloquia series. Our speakers for 2011-2012 were Sujata Patel, University of Hyderabad, India, and International Sociological Association’s Vice President for National Associations; David Brady, Duke University, and Center for European Studies; Sarah Sobieraj, Tufts University; Michael Sauder, University of Iowa and Robert Wood Johnson Scholars in Health Policy Program, Harvard University; Rene Almelling, Yale University; Brian Powell, James H. Rudy Professor, Indiana University; Joanna Dreby, University at Albany State University of New York; and Jennifer Lundquist, Associate Professor of Sociology at UMass Amherst.
Focus on Fulbright Scholars

We are pleased to host three Fulbright scholars in the department: Farhan (Pakistan) and Adane (Israel), who joined us this past year, and Rodrigo (Chile), who arrived in 2009. They will be joined in the fall by Fulbright student researcher Apoorva Ghosh, from India. Apoorva will be working with Mary Bernstein on an extended project.

Adane Zawdu is a Fulbright scholar from Israel. He earned his BA (Sociology and Philosophy) and MA (Sociology) at Tel-Aviv University. His research interests include Culture; Nationalism; Race and Ethnicity. For his doctoral thesis he seeks to explore the folk understandings of social difference in Israel.

Adane co-authored an article that was published in Ethnic and Racial Studies: “Between Global Racial and Bounded Identity: Choice of Destigmatization Strategies Among Ethiopian Jews In Israel” (2012, with Prof. Nissim Mizrachi). And he currently is working on a paper titled: “The Everyday Strategies to Equalize Oneself.”

His faculty advisor is Professor Gaye Tuchman.

Farhan Navid Yousaf (pictured at left) is a Fulbright scholar from Pakistan. He earned his MA and an M.Phil from Punjab University in Lahore. He has served Government of the Punjab, Pakistan in various capacities relating to planning and development, and is currently associated with the International Islamic University in Islamabad as a faculty member. He was awarded an ILO fellowship to represent Pakistan on a gender budgeting meeting in Italy, and is a UNDP certified Master trainer on gender equity issues. While he has publications on the subject of human trafficking, he intends to pursue his interest in ‘Human Trafficking in Pakistan: Gender and Rights perspectives’ further. He has been awarded UConn Human Rights Institute Grant 2012-13 to study women trafficking in Pakistan.

Rodrigo Figueroa is Bachelor in Sociology (University of Chile, 1998) and Master in Economics and Labor Relations (Pontifical Catholic University, Peru). He also is a professor in Sociology Department at University of Chile. He has conducted researches in areas such as economic development, poverty, middle class’s subjectivity, labor relationships, and neoliberalism. He currently is developing his doctoral thesis, which deals with the relationships between inequality and financialization in LACs. He focuses on four countries of the region: Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil. In methodological terms, this thesis is a comparative study that involves quantitative analyses as well as the description of institutional changes. Finally, His areas of interest are Economic Sociology, Sociology of Work, Social Stratification, Inequality, Development theories, Financial Markets, Political Economy, and Cultural Studies and Performativity of Economics.
Undergraduate & Graduate Student Awards and Publications

Undergraduate Awards
Janet M. Fierberg Award for Academic Achievement in Sociology and/or Social Work

Sharielle Applewhite
Rebecca Parkhurst, who was accepted into the UConn School of Social Work.

Graduate Awards

Ranita Ray was awarded an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant for her work entitled, “Youth, Poverty, and Educational Success.”

Also continuing on their grants are Lwendo Moonzwe, who received an NIH grant, and Chandra Waring, who won the SWS Chow/Green Dissertation Scholarship.

Kamryn Warren also received a State Department Scholarship to learn Nepali, a language she wishes to learn because of her interest in researching a specific refugee group.

Allen Hyde received a Mitofsky Summer Research Fellowship from the Roper Center for his study entitled, “Saving Motor City: Detroit Residents React to the Auto Bailout.”

Miho Iwata was awarded a Humanities Institute Fellowship to complete her dissertation research in Japan.

Roseanne Njiru and Farhan Younsaf were awarded Human Rights Institute Fellowships for their work on violence in internally displaced persons camps in Kenya and trafficking in Pakistan (ask for names of topics and list separately).

Malaena Taylor and Todd Vachon also received a joint Mitofsky Summer Research Fellowship for “A Tale of Two Movements: Evaluating Public Support for the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street Movements.”

Kamryn Warren and Chandra Waring were awarded one-year Multicultural Fellowships.

Shweta Majumdar Adur won the Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award from the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.

Stacy Missari and Christine Zozula’s paper, ‘Woman as...’: Personhood, Rights, and The Case of Domestic Violence,” has been chosen as this year’s winner of the Susan Porter Benson Graduate Student Paper Award in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.

Stacy Missari received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award based on her research scholarship.

Malaena Taylor won the Ronald Taylor Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper for her paper, “Denying, Deflecting, and Distracting: Identity Contests and the Tea Party Movement.”

Publications
Daring, Christa, Jen Rogue, Deric Shannon (PhD, 2011), and Abbey Willis, eds. Queering Anarchism: Addressing and Undressing Power and Desire (forthcoming).


Stacy Missari and Christine Zozula, “‘Woman As...’: Personhood, Rights and The Case of Domestic Violence,” in Societies Without Borders.


Around the Discipline
Barret Katuna, in her role as the lead United Nations Delegate to the Economic and Social Council for Sociologists for Women in Society, organized the first SWS Parallel Side Event to the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, “Feminist Sociological Insight on Literacy Projects, Community Grassroots Groups, and Rural Women’s Leadership.” It took place on March 5, 2012 in New York, New York. Participating scholars included: Manisha Desai (University of Connecticut), Shobha Gurung (Southern Utah University) and Kristy Kelly (Columbia University).
Welcome to new Assistant Professor, Emir Estrada!

We welcome Emir Estrada, who will join us in Fall 2012. Dr. Estrada obtained her PhD from University of Southern California. She will hold a joint appointment with El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean and Latin American Studies. Her research interests span Immigration, Latina/o Sociology, Childhood, Children and Work, Chicana/o Studies, Qualitative Methods, Race and Ethnic Relations, and Gender. Her recent publications include “Latina Adolescent Street Vendors in Los Angeles: Gendered Streetwise?” in Low-Wage Work, Migration and Gender edited by Anna Guevara and Nilda Flores-Gonzalez (University of Illinois Press) and “Intersectional Dignities: Latino Immigrant Street Vendor Youth in Los Angeles” in Journal of Contemporary Ethnography (both co-authored with Pierette Hondagneu Sotelo).

Emir Estrada was prominently featured in USC news: http://128.125.126.117/news/stories/1171/going-places/

Jobs/Alumni

Angie Beeman (PhD, 2010) has accepted a position at Baruch College.

Mary Burke (PhD, 2010) accepted a joint position at University of Vermont as lecturer of Sociology and Women’s Studies.

Jungyun Gill (PhD, 2011) accepted a tenure-track position at Mountain State University in West Virginia.

Gretchen Marin (MA, 2012) has accepted a position as the Coordinator of International Programs and Latino Academic Success at Elms College in Chicopee, MA.

Thomas Hochschild, Jr. (PhD, 2011) began a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Valdosta College.

Mustafa Gurbuz (PhD, 2012) will be a Post-Doctoral Scholar in the Sociology Department at the University of South Florida.

Sergio Mobilia (MA, 2010) was awarded the Global ERG Leadership Award for his efforts organizing Sum of Google 2011 in Buenos Aires. Sergio works for Google Argentina.

Graduations

James Hogan, MA
Allen Hyde, MA
Gretchen Marin, MA
Malaena Taylor, MA
Todd Vachon, MA
Mustafa Gurbuz, PhD
Barb Gurr, PhD
Tom Hochschild, PhD
Melissa Lavin, PhD
Happy Retirement,
Gaye and Arnie!

and almost no scholarly space to discuss women or gender. But the work of this pioneering groups created a revolution. Within 25 years of the formation of SWS, the Presidents of every major professional sociological organization in the US were women. Gaye served as Vice President of SWS in 1976-77. Gaye has been part of the pioneering group of women who broke glass ceilings and worked hard to change the rules that keep out women and minorities in academia.

Gaye’s scholarship continues to attract significant attention nationally and internationally. Her book Making News was published in 1978; it was republished this year. Gaye has been invited repeatedly to Europe, Latin America, and Israel to talk about making news in 2010 and 2011. Her latest book, Wannabe U, is making news across the world. As scholars examine the rapidly changing structures of academia and the consequences of such changes, Gaye continues to be a much sought-after speaker and commentator within academia and outside it, nationally and internationally.

Arnold Dashefsky. Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies and Professor of Sociology and Director, Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, retired in June 2012. Arnie has been a pioneer in the field of Jewish Studies. He is the Founding Director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life, located in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, at UConn. He has also served as the Director of the Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank.


A former Associate Head of Sociology, Arnie has been a dedicated teacher and mentor. He designed some of the first courses on American Jewry for our university. He plans to continue teaching and directing the work of the North American Jewish Databank for sometime.

Gaye Tuchman retired in December 2011. Her contributions to Sociology and our department cannot be over stated. Her life captures the ways in which our discipline changed. Gaye received her PhD in 1969. She was the first woman to hold a tenure track position in the country. She was one of the pioneering women who created Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) in 1969. At that time there were no women in the American Sociological Association’s (ASA) executive bodies, no ASA sections on sex and gender, no sociology classes on gender, very few books or articles written by women,
Susan Eisenhandler completed 25 years of service at UConn.

Noel Casenave completed 20 years of service.

Mary Bernstein, Nancy Naples, and Michael Wallace completed 10 years of service.

Thank You!

New Beginnings!

Rachel Leventhal-Weiner welcomed daughter Emily Rose on July 18, 2011.

Jeremiah Coldsmit welcomed Nicolas on August 1, 2011.

Jayme Schwartzman Amarone and Andy Amarone welcomed their son Bence on August 6, 2011.

Travis Lowe's son Isaac Scott was born on September 29, 2011.

Barret Katuna married Benjamin Kehl on December 17, 2011 in Westbrook, CT.

Nikki McGary and Nate Teodoro welcomed Amber Sierra Teodoro on June 2, 2012.

Kim Price-Glynn welcomed a baby girl, Lilly, this spring.

Obituaries

Jack Wright, who completed a PhD in Sociology at UConn, passed away in May 2012. Jack was a much loved member of a cohort of grads and faculty. He is survived by his wife, Holly Best.

Obituary in Portland, ME Press Herald: http://tinyurl.com/77rb37x

Ronald Fernandez, a seminal scholar on the disenfranchisement of Puerto Ricans died in August 2011. He got his PhD from UConn Sociology, and worked as a professor of sociology at Central Connecticut State University. Dr. Fernandez’s research into the lives of the Los Macheteros, the men who were involved in the Wells Fargo armed car robbery in Hartford, led him to develop a broader interest in the history and colonial subject status of Puerto Ricans. His books include The Disenchanted Island: Puerto Rico and the United States in the Twentieth Century, and America beyond Black and White. His book on Puerto Rican cultural history was nationally recognized by the American Library Association with the Denali Book Award.
Devon Goss graduated from Lewis and Clark College with an M.S. in Psychological and Cultural Studies in 2012, where she examined the trans identity movement and the concept of resistance to transphobic oppression via an ethnographic lens. Previously, she investigated third party perceptions of sexual assault involving alcohol consumption as part of her undergraduate studies at the University of Portland, winning a Psi Chi Western Regional Award in 2009. She is interested in continuing her studies of queer community and social movements at UConn.

Caner Hazar graduated with a master’s degree in Women’s Studies from Istanbul University and did graduate work on sexuality at Ruhr-University Bochum. He has been a contributor to independent news portals and a volunteer for solidarity organizations. His masters thesis deals with sexuality, gender and sex as categories of knowledge which are at work in the construction of sexual difference and hierarchy using interviews with sexual dissidents in Turkey. His research interests are sexualities, social constructivism, social implications of queer theory, epistemology and political sociology. He plans to analyze the role of class in the social construction of sexual subcultures.

Koyel Khan received her B.A. in Sociology from Presidency College, Calcutta and M.A in Sociology from Jadavpur University. She has taught Sociology in high school for a while and also worked in a World Bank project which was concerned with development of rural livelihoods by improving access to information through ICT tools. She is particularly interested in social stratification and mobility, development and culture.

Granite Angran Li graduated with a B.A from the Ocean University of China. He previously traveled to the U.S. to participate in the Summer Work Travel Program in Montana and worked with Professor Mackinnon on a paper titled, “Modernization, Rising Expectations, Relative Deprivation and a New Form of Social Unrest in China” during the summer 2011. He is interested in focusing on social movements, political sociology, and the development of human rights in China.

Gregory Mills graduated with an MA in Sociology from the University of South Florida, where he gained several academic honors. He is currently finishing his thesis which examines perceptions of cultural hostility and patterns of identity negotiation among first-generation Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 America. Gregory has lived and worked abroad extensively, which gives his research a sharp international context, and sparked his interests in migration and transnationalism. He is also interested in immigrant educational and occupational mobility, especially since the onset of the Great Recession in the late 2000s. Gregory is also an avid backpacker and hiker.

Heidi Obach graduated from SUNY Binghamton with a BA in Sociology. Her interests range from sociology of the family to education and child welfare policy. She presented her thesis “Race and Foster Care” at the Eastern Sociological Society 2012 meeting. It examines the way race impacts the experiences of fostered children through the descriptions of foster care caseworkers and how those descriptions compare with the views of child welfare professionals and policy makers. Her current interests include exploring how different groups and organizations approach educational equity and reducing the achievement gap.

Shi (Sylvia) Pu graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Finance from Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in China in 2010. She received several highly exclusive awards for academic excellence including the China National Scholarship. She worked for a major state-owned energy company for two years, where she discovered both the unjust truth uncovered by China’s rapid economic development and her determination to make Sociology her lifetime career. Her areas of interests are quantitative methodology, political economy, social change, inequality and human rights. Her ultimate academic pursuit is to find the key to China’s democracy.

Meral Tunador graduated cum laude with a major in Sociology and a minor in Near East Studies from the University of Washington. As a UW honors scholar, Meral conducted ethnographic research on the transition to adulthood in gay men and how it coincides and conflicts with contemporary life course theory perspectives. Her broad research interests include social movements, transnational identities, and sexualities.

Lauren Van Derzee graduated magna cum laude with dual degrees in French and Sociology from Susquehanna University. She received the Outstanding Sociology Student award for her senior thesis and involvement in the department. She has worked as a research assistant cleaning and coding data for the Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission. She also spent a semester studying in France developing language skills and knowledge of the French political and education systems. Lauren is particularly interested in focusing on education, stratification, social movements, and quantitative methods.

Stephen Wulff graduated with a Master’s degree in the social sciences from the University of Chicago in 2011, where he investigated how marginalized communities facing secondary marginalization build social capital and enhance their resilience within urban environments. At UConn, he looks forward to further investigating problems related to resiliency at the crossroads of sexuality, race, ethnicity, gender, and class by using qualitative field methods to uncover the
mechanisms and contexts that operate as the sources of both risk and resilience for marginalized groups.

Rachel Sloan graduated magna cum laude with college honors and distinction in Sociology from Albright College. She received the Lisamarie Cope ’02 Memorial Award and the Sociology and Anthropology Department Research Award for her research on gender stereotypes. In addition to her interest in gender, she is also interested in cultural sociology, particularly the effects of globalization and tourism, as well as politically conservative social movement organizations.

Welcome to UConn and to the Sociology Department!

We have a great team of faculty, staff and graduate students. None of our accomplishments could have been achieved without our collective commitment to excellence, collegiality and commitment to outstanding professional standards.

Bandana Purkayastha has been appointed Department Head and will continue in this position for the next four years.

Kathryn Strother Ratcliff continues to do an outstanding job as Associate Head and

Scheduler. This is a monstrous job, requiring the juggling of multiple schedules, faculty interests and skills, graduate student teaching abilities and schedules, and room availabilities. Scheduling requires an ability to keep track of many moving pieces that simultaneously shift right up until the day preregistration begins—and often thereafter! Kay has been unfappable in creating a carefully developed schedule for the department.

Michael Wallace has done an excellent job as Director of Graduate Studies. As the university grows more complex in structure, the job of the DGS has become complicated. Mike has ably managed the multiple needs of the graduate program and introduced some signature programs of his own, including a very successful Political Economy Workshop series. Mike and the graduate program committee have selected an outstanding class of eleven graduate students next year. Mike has worked with Bandana, Kay, and David to ensure the strength of our graduate program.

David Weakliem has served as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and has been a steady and important factor in maintaining the undergraduate program even as he assumed the additional task as Editor of Contemporary Sociology. He has worked with Bandana, Kay, and Mike on the Planning Committee to ensure a full and diverse program, serving the needs of not only our undergraduate majors and minors, but of the entire university in our offerings of Gen Ed and W seats.

Arlene Goodwin has remained consistently invaluable, as always. Without her, we would easily overspend our budget, and get mired in multiple crises. In a year with an interim head, a new director of graduate studies, multiple faculty promotions, searches, problems with our building—Manchester Hall—and numerous changes in technologies and protocol at the university Arlene has been a rock guiding us smoothly through the changes. She has taken additional significant tasks such as supervising office moves, making sure the construction at Manchester Hall is accomplished smoothly. Her work makes all of our lives easier. Thank you, Arlene, for being the gifted rock of this department!

Kathy Covey continues to be the spine of the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs. She is the front lines of admitting new majors, securing plans of study, organizing the administration of the graduate program, and administering the admissions process. In addition she constantly acts as a mentor to graduate and undergraduate students who are bewildered by the paperwork they have to complete. Thank you, Kathy, for your incredible attention to detail and your good cheer when all else looked grim!

Chelsea Martin and Rachel Eldracher were our student workers this year. We truly appreciate their help with copying, scanning, and all the other “little” activities that made our lives so much easier through the year. Chelsea graduated this year; we wish her the very best for the future!

Trisha Tiamzon, thank you for designing and helping with this newsletter. Thank you also for helping with office assignments for graduate students.

Nikki McGary and Trisha Tiamzon, we appreciate your work as the past and current head of our wonderful graduate students.