

Spring 2011



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

# Social Tracks Commencement Edition

## *Sociological Perspectives* Returns to UO

This spring Associate Professor **Jim Elliott** and Professor Emeritus **Bob O'Brien** won the editorship of *Sociological Perspectives*, bringing it back to University of Oregon where it began in 1957. The co-editors selected doctoral student **Jessica Schultz** to be the Managing Editor.

This general-interest

sociology publication is the Pacific Sociological Association's official journal. Volumes 1-3 and 5-15 were edited by UO faculty; now volumes 55-57 will be edited here, too. Starting July 1 and continuing for three years, new manuscript submissions will arrive at UO to undergo the rigorous peer review process.

While this department has edited several journals over the decades, bringing back *Sociological Perspectives* is an important indicator of our peers' respect.

This endeavor is supported with contributions from the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, the Sociology Department, and the Pacific Sociological Association.

## Alpha Kappa Delta Career Panel



and appreciate diverse people.

The speakers also stressed that the research skills they learned helped them develop plans and arguments. Two said they learned to write effectively.

Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the international sociology honors society, convened in January a panel of UO sociology alumni to explain to our students how they used their education to found their businesses.

The participants were, from left to right in the photo:

- **Jeff Orlandini, 1999**, principal, Northwest Youth Corps (paid outdoor job training and environmental education for troubled youth)
- **Jamie Floyd, 1994**, founder and brewmaster, Ninkasi Brewing Co.
- **Kathrin Walsch**, the College's Director of Development helped organize the event

- **Rhonda Meadows, 1990**, founder, Bridge Meadows (foster care community for children and retirees)

- **Bernice Johnston, 1965**, founder, Milestone Unlimited Inc (management consulting)

- **Windsor Calkins, 1967**, partner, Calkins & Calkins (law firm)

Despite wide generational differences, they voiced similar themes when talking about what the discipline of sociology meant to them in the long run.

All said sociology gave them a critical eye and a unique way of viewing patterns in society and in human interactions. This helped them interact with

Finally, all panelists cited being inspired by professors who are passionate about their field. The combination of motivation and skills were essential to them in launching successful careers, across a diverse array of fields.

About 60 students attended the AKD Career Panel. The event gave them an opportunity to put down the textbooks and consider their futures. It was so successful, AKD plans to repeat it annually.

AKD and the Department thank the speakers sincerely. A special thank you also goes to KaLynn Alley, AKD Vice President of Student and Faculty relations, for her dedicated efforts to AKD.

*"No matter what I end up doing in my life, the skills and knowledge I have gained from my major will always benefit me."*

# Recent Awards

Former graduate student **Shannon Bell** (Ph.D. 2010) and Associate Professor **Richard York** received the 2011 Best Paper Award from the journal *Rural Sociology* for their article entitled "Community Economic Identity: The Coal Industry and Ideology Construction in West Virginia." The same article received an "Honorable Mention" for the Outstanding Publication Award from the Environment & Technology section of the American Sociological Association (ASA).

**York** also won the Environmental Sociology Teaching & Mentorship Award from the ASA's Environment & Technology section. A crew of **York's** graduate students since he joined UO in 2002 collected 81 pages of material to substantiate their nomination. In announcing the award June 8th, the section chair said: "The nominations this year were truly amazing and the committee members and I were faced with a very competitive field to choose from. . . . Congratulations to Richard on an excellent record of teaching and mentorship! The formal award will be presented at the section's business meeting in Las Vegas [in August]."

To acknowledge **York's** "demonstrated excellence in teaching, superior scholarship, and dedicated service the college," the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences gave him the Richard A. Bray Fellowship for 2010-11, 2012-12, and 2012-13, which is accompanied by a salary stipend.

In a May reception, the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences honored outgoing Department Heads, including Professor **Patricia A. Gwartney**, for their three-year stints of leadership.

An article by Associate Professor **Jocelyn Hollander** was nominated for the "Best Article Award" in the journal *Violence Against Women*, 2010. The Dean also named her incoming department head for the next three academic years. She selected **Greg McLauchlan** to be Associate Head.

Associate Professor **Jim Elliott** continued work on his National Science Foundation grant with co-principal investigator Scott Frickel (Washington State University), entitled "Urban-Environmental Restructuring in the U.S. Cities."

Associate Professor **Jiannbin "J" Shiao** and his coauthor, Professor **Mia Tuan**, received the 2010 Research Paper Award from the ASA's Section on Asia and Asian America for the best article on Asian America published in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

**Ann Leymon** (Ph.D. expected 2012) received a Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation in the amount of \$9,745 to support her dissertation on labor unions and economic crisis.

**Christina Ergas** was able to gather dissertation data in Cuba this year with grants from UO's Center for the Study of Women in Society and the Sociology Department. Her doctoral dissertation is entitled "Gendered Work in Havana, Cuba's Urban Agriculture."

**Miriam Abelson** and **Hannah Holleman** were each selected by the College of Arts & Sciences' Scholarship Committee to receive the 2011-12 Carolyn M. Stokes Memorial Scholarship. Skip Stokes set up this award to honor his deceased sister's passions in sociology and psychology.

**Stephanie Raymond-Hughes** and **Tracy DeHaan** each received a General University Scholarship for 2011-12. The selection committee noted their academic achievements, demonstrated leadership, hard work, and willingness to tackle tough challenges in the classroom. This award goes to those who "are just the type of student who most contributes to and benefits from the University of Oregon learning community."

**Tracy DeHaan** also received the Dan Kimble First-Year Teaching Award, jointly sponsored by the Graduate School and Teaching Effectiveness

Program to recognize outstanding teaching by graduate teaching fellows (GTFs) in their first year of classroom experience.

The Department of Sociology chose the following graduate students for competitive awards this year:

**Madhurima Das**, Lawrence Carter Graduate Student Research Award.

**Matthew Eddy**, Data Collection and Presentation Award.

**Chris Hardnack**, Distinguished Graduate Student Teaching Award.

**Katie Rogers** and **Hannah Holleman**, Wasby-Johnson Dissertation Research Award.

**Matthew Clement** and **Jessica Schultz**, Graduate Student Publication Award, for an article forthcoming in *Sociological Forum* entitled: "Political Economy, Ecological Modernization, and Energy Use: A Panel Analysis of State-Level Energy Use in the USA, 1960-1990."

Incoming graduate student **Mirranda Willette** received an invitation from the American Sociological Association to participate in the Honors Program at the annual meeting in Las Vegas this year. With contributions from the UO President, Graduate School, Center for the Study of Women in Society, McNair Program, and Sociology Department, she accepted.

Former Assistant Professor **Yvonne Braun** won the Ersted Award for teaching excellence. This is UO's most prestigious teaching and mentoring award for junior faculty. Braun is now on the faculty of the Women & Gender Studies Department and the International Studies Department.

The Sociology Department is well known among students for its passionate, yet demanding and organized instructors. Two years ago, Associate Professor of Sociology **Michael Dreiling** won the Herman Award for superior teaching, UO's most prestigious for senior faculty.

# Stanford Steals Professor Saperstein

It is hard to believe that three years have passed since I arrived in Eugene, fresh from finishing my Ph.D. at Berkeley, eager to start my new life as a professor of Sociology.

I am grateful for all that I have learned, about being a teacher, a mentor and a colleague, during my time here at UO.

I hope that I have been able to “pay it forward,” as well: to pass on helpful tips and tricks on navigating the academy to my students, along with new perspectives on race and ethnicity, immigration, population dynamics and what it means to conduct sociological research.

Perhaps the most rewarding experiences during my time at Oregon have come from the all-too-rare opportunities to work one-on-one with students.

I could not be more proud of the work of my senior honors thesis advisees, three of whom – Robert Pickett, Xuanyao Zhu, and Miranda Willette – are graduating this year.

Four research assistants, two graduate students (Sarah Cribbs and MeCherri Tarver) and two undergraduates (Courtney Veronneau and Miranda Willette), were indispensable in

gathering data and doing preliminary analyses for my own research, as well.

And it has been a pleasure to advise the graduate students of the Social Science Feminist Network Research Interest Group for the past two years, as they navigated the difficult task of conducting collaborative research on differences in time use among faculty at Oregon.

Their efforts – led by co-coordinators Sarah Cribbs and Miriam Abelson – culminated in a recent two-day symposium, “Inequalities in Academia,” that brought together faculty from across campus, and even around the state, to consider the structure of academic work. All too often, academics pontificate from their “ivory towers” about the troubles of the world, without turning a sociological lens on our own practices, recognizing when we reproduce social inequality, too.

Facilitating those moments of reflexivity is one of the reasons I wanted to become a professor in the first place.

When people suddenly realize that their actions (and inactions) have meaning and consequences it often generates feelings of guilt, frustration and helplessness – as anyone who has taken a Sociology course can attest – but it can also be a

moment of inspiration when the deeper understanding hits that, if their actions are implicated in maintaining inequality, then they also have the power to create change.

As I told last year’s Alpha Kappa Delta inductees, one of my favorite sociological quotations is “It could have been otherwise.” Everett C. Hughes’ words are an important reminder to not take our norms, traditions and institutional arrangements for granted. They are neither “natural” nor inevitable.

That said, three years ago, the University of Oregon Sociology Department took a chance on me when no one else would ... in this case, I can honestly say, I would not have had it any other way.



*Aliya Saperstein departs Eugene on July 1 for her new position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Stanford University.*

## UO Sociology by the Numbers

Since the University of Oregon began deliberately growing the size of the student body in 2008-09, the size of the Sociology Department has grown, too. Between 2006-07 and 2010-11:

- Annual undergraduate enrollment in sociology courses increased by 40% (from 4,900 to 6,800).
- The number of sociology majors increased by 57% (from 478 to 752).
- The number of sociology courses offered each year increased 20% (from 60 to 72, excluding summers).
- The number of Bachelor’s degrees in sociology increased 35% (from 196 to 265).

- The number of teaching assistants at .4 FTE increased 43% (from 21 to 30).
- But the number of faculty increased by just 7% (from 15 to 16 FTE).

The annual exit survey of graduating sociology majors produced the several quotes found in this document. The survey results also show:

- The percent “very satisfied,” overall, “with the education you have received at the University of Oregon:” 39
- The percent “very satisfied,” overall, with their education in the

Department of Sociology: 46

- The percent who said “an instructor, GTF, or staff member at UO ... has cared about [me] as a person:” 80.


Other statistics:

- The percent of UO Sociology Ph.D. degrees who accepted tenure-track assistant professor positions at U.S. universities and colleges in the last decade: 85.
- The fraction of Sociology faculty at the University of Idaho with UO Ph.D. degrees: 3 out of 4.

## Sociology Vision Statement

Faculty members of the University of Oregon Department of Sociology are united in seeking to provide a high-quality educational program for our undergraduate and graduate students. We seek to equip students with a sound academic foundation that helps them to question critically, think logically, communicate clearly, act resourcefully, and live ethically. Our graduate program further aims to develop thinkers, leaders, and innovators whose subsequent efforts will benefit the human social world and life on the planet. Our research ranges from broad, global sweeps of social change to micro-level social interaction, using an array of theories and methods. We generate new knowledge through our scholarship. The results of our research help people to understand the evolving social, political, economic, technological, and physical environment, to respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals, to value a diversity of opinions and ideas, and to formulate public policies that reject discrimination, bigotry, and violence.

### Sarah Lazzeroni Jazzes Our Facebook Page

The UO Sociology Department would like to take this opportunity to give a special thank you to graduating senior Sarah Lazzeroni whose consistent, responsible efforts and excellent judgment have defined our Facebook page in its first entire year. See for yourself at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/University-of-Oregon-Sociology-Department/173215078170>. 

*"Being a transfer student here at the UO, I have recognized the transition into Sociology as my major as a blessing in disguise. I have learned so much in just these two years and cannot wait to let my curiosity as a sociologist and my passion for people, continue on post graduation this term."*

## From the Department Head

Here it is, Friday afternoon of finals week, and all that is left in "Social Tracks" is about two inches of space for me to summarize a year. Since the preceding articles capture a great deal, I will just add a few more highlights. We engineered a successful joint hire with the Environmental Studies Program this year, helping solidify our reputation as a leading environmental sociology program in the nation. Losing Aliya Saperstein to Stanford University and Val Burris to retirement is offset partially by the news this week that we can search for their replacements next year. Hands down, the most astonishing event this year was an out-of-the-blue gift from the estate of Betty Marquina (B.A. 1948) in the amount of \$340,000, no strings attached. The \$12,000 annually this generates will allow us to fund new faculty/student collaborations, establish student awards with modest honoraria, and fund some of the little things that help create a community (pizza!). I officially hand the gavel to my successor on August 22, ending a three-year stint as Department Head with relief. This is also the end of my 30th year as a faculty member in the UO Sociology Department. I believe that the faculty and graduate students are the strongest they have ever been. Many thanks to the graduating seniors who answered the exit survey. We take your comments and recommendations very seriously in prioritizing how to improve the bachelor's degree program. Stay in touch. Look for alumni issues of "Social Tracks" in email and on Facebook.



## Graduating Seniors' Plans

Each year the Sociology Department asks its graduating seniors what they plan to do in the near future. Here is just a sample of some of their responses:

Adoption Services Assistant at Holt International Children's Services in the China program.

Animal Control Officer at the Springfield Police Department. Hope to use that to eventually acquire a fully sworn police position with them.

Assistant Director for Fund for the Public Interest, a nonprofit.

Bask in celebration for the moment, then do everything in my power to pursue and obtain a degree from the University of Oregon's Law school.

Continue my education at the Acad-

emy of Art in hopes of blending my interest in sociology with my interest in the fashion industry.

Move with my husband to wherever the Army stations us. Work with at-risk youth or a substance abuse recovery program on the base where we will be stationed.

Play volleyball overseas.

Pursue my Masters in Social Work so that I can make a difference in people's lives. And I want world peace!

Pursue my vocation in working with at-risk and homeless youth in the Portland area.

Research assistant in the Spatial and Map Cognition Research Lab in the UO Geography Department.

Stay in Eugene for a year of internship in nonprofit marketing and development. [Eventually] work as a nonprofit consultant and fundraising professional to help nonprofits optimize their performances.

Teach English in Italy for a year.

Travel, see where the wind takes me!

Travel, volunteer, and eventually work empowering women!

Work for a non-profit that works with adolescents and their families suffering from mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and depression.

*"Sociology has truly opened my eyes to a new way of understanding the world. I am so glad that I did not miss out on this major"*