



Department Update: The Sophia Program

By Leslie Wang, Sociology Department Chair

The new academic year begins with the College's implementation of the first phase of the Sophia Program, the new General Education curriculum. For the past six years sociology faculty members have dedicated a lot of energy

into redesigning all of our sociology courses to meet the new learning outcomes for both assessment and the Sophia Program; we are pleased that it is finally in place.

The Department of Sociology has incorporated many of our courses into two of the four learning outcomes of the Sophia Program; these are Science for the Citizen and Cultures and Systems. Sociological Imaginations (SOC 153), Social Problems (SOC 203), Social Psychology (SOC 204), and Contested Masculinities (SOC 220) are courses within Science for the Citizens. Social Inequalities in Edu-

cation (SOC 230), Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in the U.S. (SOC 255), and Sociology of Families (SOC 257) are courses within Cultures and Systems. As a social science, Sociology plays an integral role in both science and cultures. By including all seven of our 100 and 200 level courses into the Sophia Program and dividing them between science and cultures, all students benefit with the opportunity to select from a variety of sociology courses as part of their general education.

The second phase of the Sophia Program will be implemented next fall semester. The sociology faculty members are now rethinking our curriculum and reconstructing our courses that may be included as a Basic W, Critical Thinking Seminar, Women's Voices, Experiential Learning, Intercultural Competence, Social Responsibility, and/or Global Learning. Our hope is to be able to share our passion of our discipline with as many students who may be interested in experiencing a course with us.

Wolsfeld Teaching Grant: Social Construction of Gender

By Susan Alexander

The Wolsfeld Teaching Grant, funded by Susan Shalgos Wolsfeld '64, allows a sociology faculty member to work on curriculum development. Last spring the grant was awarded to Susan Alexander. During this summer, Susan updated the course Social Construction of Gender to include new readings and new topic areas for the course, which was taught during the fall 2012 semester.

One exciting new topic area included is "gender in cyber culture." In this section of the course students examine whether this emergent cultural space is gender neutral or if cyber culture reinscribes traditional gender stereotypes. During finals week, students will be completing a research project examining specific sites in cyber space (e.g. multiple player on-line games such as World of Warcraft) to determine whether gender stereotyping continues in this newly developing cultural space.

The second new topic area included this semester is "transgender," which is when a person's gender identity

(self-identification as women, man, or neither) does not fit one's assigned sex at birth (as female, male, or intersexed). Students learned about the questions transgendered persons are raising regarding binary gendered thinking; for example, legal issues faced by transgendered persons wishing to change their legal sex. The new material has been well received by the students this semester.



Susan (top right) with Students from SOC 365

Kahn Family Summer Internship Grants

This past summer was the first year for the Kahn Family Summer Internship Grants, funded by Maura O'Neil Kahn '83. These grants are competitive (only two were awarded) and given to students who are participating in unpaid internships for the summer that relate to their career goals. The Kahn Internship Grant provides a stipend to assist with housing and other expense while on the internship.

The Sociology Department is proud to announce one of our seniors, Caroline Keep, was awarded one of these grants for her Internship at Safe Haven Family Shelter in Nashville, TN.

My Internship at Safe Haven Family Shelter in Nashville, TN

By Caroline Keep '13



This past summer I interned at Safe Haven Family Shelter in Nashville, TN. While I was interning, I also collected data for my senior research project on family homelessness.

My past experiences had not included working with the homeless population. Thus, being fully immersed in this new environment at Safe Haven taught me so much about myself as professional and as a person.

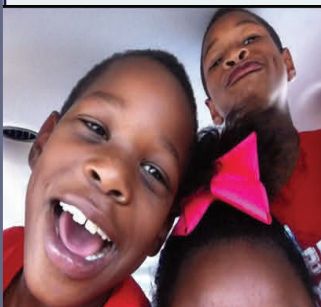
Safe Haven provided a summer camp for the residents' children to attend while the parents were working. One of my responsibilities was to ensure the children were transported safely to and from the camps each day. Through this experience, I developed a close bond with each of them. The children taught me so many things I have never even thought about and it was so hard when I had to leave at the end of the summer!

An addition responsibility I had was assisting my supervisor with writing government grants. I collected demographics on families that have successfully gone through Safe Haven in hopes to secure funding for future programs.

For my senior comprehensive project, I inter-

viewed eight people who stayed at the homeless shelter, which was my favorite part of the internship. In the spring 2012 semester, I took a course called Research Methods that taught us how to conduct interviews. I executed the interviewing techniques I learned in the classroom and found significant differences among the interviewees. I tape-recorded the conversations and later transcribed them. I am currently in the process of coding and organizing them for my research paper.

The time I spent at Safe Haven was unforgettable. I loved meeting new people and learning new things. Every day was spent differently at Safe Haven and I cannot wait to go back and visit!



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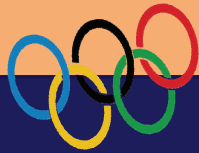
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E-mail Susan Alexander at salexand@saintmarys.edu and let us know what you are up to!



Sociology Alumnae



Audrey Ballinger '08

Meeting and Event Services Coordinator for
the U.S. Olympic Committee

When I decided to take an internship with the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) in 2009, I did not immediately realize that I would be putting my Sociology degree to work. In fact, the internship sounded more like a five month hiatus from the real world when I couldn't find a full time job and didn't have a clue what I wanted to do with my life.

After my internship, I was hired on as an Administrative Assistant and eventually moved into my current position as a Meeting and Event Services Coordinator in the Marketing Division. My time with the USOC has given me many opportunities to work events that I could only have dreamed of, including: a free throw shooting contest on Capitol Hill; a White House visit with President Obama and the First Lady; a fundraising Gala with Mitt and Ann Romney; international events with Lord Sebastian Coe and IOC President Jacques Rogge; being behind the scenes on interviews with athletes like Michael Phelps; and even a party where Britney Spears showed up. I must be dreaming.

The highlight of my last



few years with the USOC was working the London Olympic Games this past summer. In London, I was part of a team that ran USA House, the hospitality hub for Team USA's friends and family. USA House gave Olympic athletes the chance to celebrate their accomplishments away from the public eye, where both competing Olympians and Olympic legends came to spend time with their families and relax. My favorite

part was watching all of the guests interact and the collective patriotism displayed by all. Every time USA medaled the entire house would stand up, put their hand over their heart and sing the national anthem. It was amazing to see the entire place come together and celebrate.

The best part about working in the Olympic Movement is not the famous people I get to watch from afar but the up-close look I get at the role sport plays in society. Sport creates an opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation that is separate from religious, economic or political influence. Sport reaches across boundaries of inequality and creates opportunities on both the domestic and international level.



Audrey in London
for the 2012 summer Olympics



Welcome Visiting Instructor Sheryl L. Switaj

This year the Sociology Department is pleased to welcome Professor Sheryl Switaj. She has a teaching and research interest in deviance and crime. In addition to the introductory level course, she taught Juvenile Deviance in the fall, and will be teaching Crime and Society in the spring. Professor Switaj is an Notre Dame alumna — from the first year ND welcomed women to their undergraduate program!

Sociology Senior Comprehensive Research Projects

Courtney Albrecht

“Does Race Matter?: How Teaching Students of Color Shapes White Teachers Identities?”

Meghan Dillon

“Show Me Your Papers!: A Content Analysis of Barriers of Anti-Immigration Legislation in the United States”

Molly Harmon

“What is Blackness?: How Race of Ownership Effects BET Programming?”

Caitlyn Holman

“Real Beauty: An Examination of the Ways that Saint Mary’s College Students View Women in the Media”

Caroline Keep

“Homeward Bound: How the Homeless Construct the Road to Self-Sufficiency?”

Hilary Whitsett

“Targeting Women: Direct Consumer Advertising in Women’s Magazines”



Front row: Caitlyn Holman, Molly Harmon, and Meghan Dillon
Back row: Courtney Albrecht, Caroline Keep, and Hilary Whitsett

Congratulations to all!

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