

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings friends and alumni of the UWM Department of Sociology!



As I write this letter I am looking out the windows of the chair's office on the 7th floor of Bolton Hall, which as many of you know has some marvelous views of Lake Michigan and downtown Milwaukee. However, on this particular day, the sky is overcast and the view is somewhat less impressive than it can be on better weather days. I cannot help but think that this is perhaps a metaphor for the ominous times we are experiencing as a department, a university and a member of the University of Wisconsin System. The system is facing one of the largest cuts in state funding in recent history. And the effects of these cuts are working their way through the various members of the system, to UWM, and of course, to our department as well. While at this time we do not know exactly how this scenario will ultimately play out, the dark mood here is almost palpable. Across the UWM campus and across the UW System, people are worried about the security of their jobs as well as those of their colleagues, the impact of the cuts on our students and their educational goals, and the overall impact of this state of affairs on the future of higher education in Wisconsin. We will know more in the coming days and weeks, but hopefully the next newsletter will contain better news on these issues.

Looking forward, there is some good news to report! We are especially happy to welcome our newest member of the department, Assistant Professor Timothy O'Brien. Dr. O'Brien received his PhD in Sociology from Indiana University and has been an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Evansville. His substantive interests range from the sociology of science and law to political sociology and religion. Some of his current research focuses on the social construction of expert witnesses in courts and how people make sense of what is authoritative knowledge and what counts as "expert" or legitimate.

While we welcomed Dr. O'Brien to the department in the past year, we also have said goodbye to several long-time and beloved faculty and staff members. Professors Nancy Mathiowetz, Stacey Oliker, and Frank Wilson, with a combined 60 plus years as faculty members at UWM, retired in 2015. Long-term senior lecturers Dr. Mark Mantyh and Dr. Thomas Moore, having taught thousands of students over a combined 48 years of service to the department, also retired in 2015. We thank all of our departing colleagues for their numerous contributions to the department, and wish them the best in their retirement!

At the end of the day, while we must absorb these losses and face an uncertain financial future, our commitment to learning and research excellence remains unchanged. Peer and student evaluations of our faculty and academic staff at both the undergraduate and graduate level continue to rate the quality of instruction at the highest levels. After several years of declining enrollments in the undergraduate major, we are experiencing double digit increases this year. Our newer PhD program produced its first graduate this past year, and our faculty continues to be highly respected national and international scholars in fields ranging from crime and inequality, scientific knowledge and politics, global consumption and change, and work, health, and sexuality.

We always enjoy hearing from our alumni about your memories of the UWM sociology programs, including how those ideas and skills that were a part of your educational experiences here have proved valuable to your current careers. Please contact us by visiting our web site or email us at sociology@uwm.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald E. Green". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Donald E. Green, Chair
Department of Sociology

Report from The Director of Graduate Studies, John Roberts

Our graduate programs are essential to the Department's intellectual life, and we take pride in the achievements of our graduate students. One particularly important milestone in the Department's storied history of graduate education was recently achieved with the celebration of our first PhD graduate. The PhD program began in 2011, and this summer Mark Caldwell became the first of our students to finish and successfully defend the doctoral dissertation. Mark's dissertation work, "Health of the Nation: The Impact of Racial and Income Segregation on Food Insecurity in the United States," was conducted under the direction of major professor Marcus Britton. Mark is now employed as Senior Research Analyst in the Health Care Home Program in the Minnesota Department of Health. Congratulations to Mark, and to all faculty and staff who worked to establish the PhD program.



UWM Sociology Faculty spending quality time with Pounce

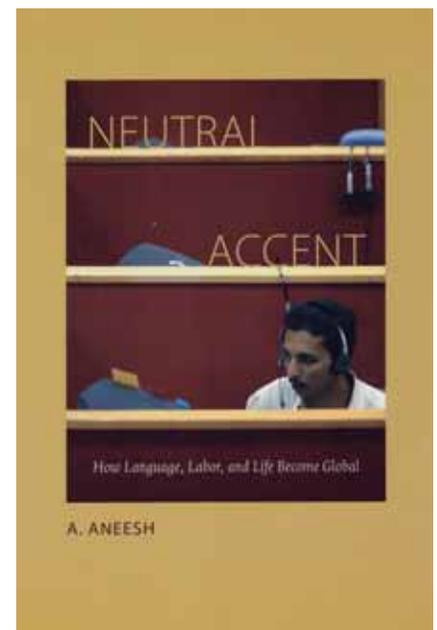
Our MA program continues to thrive, with graduates moving on to further academic study or to rewarding careers in government, non-profit, and for-profit organizations. MA graduates in Spring and Summer 2015 included Marcella BlomWillis, Alexander Bryan, Elisabeth Callahan, Katherine Fredricks, Emily Schulz, and Rachel Verde.

The Department recently initiated two new awards for graduate students, an Annual Graduate Student Paper Award and an Annual Graduate Student Teaching Award. PhD student Matthew McCarthy won the 2015 Graduate Student Paper Award for his paper "Toward a Free Information Movement." Matt's paper recently appeared in the journal *Sociological Forum*, a respected outlet for the publication of sociological research. PhD student Kenneth Jackson won the 2015 Graduate Student Teaching Award for the excellence of his teaching portfolio, including course evaluations by the undergraduates who took his courses and his exams, exercises, and other class materials. In addition, Mark Caldwell was awarded Honorable Mention status for his teaching portfolio. Congratulations to all.

Interest in both our MA and PhD programs continues to be high. At this writing, applications for graduate study in the Department are up 24% from the same date last year. We encourage anyone who may be interested in graduate study with us to explore the information on our website, and to contact us at grad-sociology@uwm.edu with any questions about our programs or application procedures.

Aneesh publishes *Neutral Accent*

In May 2015, Prof. A. Aneesh's latest book was published by Duke University Press. According to the publisher, in *Neutral Accent*, A. Aneesh employs India's call centers as useful sites for studying global change. The horizon of global economic shift, the consequences of global integration, and the ways in which call center work "neutralizes" racial, ethnic, and national identities become visible from the confines of their cubicles. In his interviews with call service workers and in his own work in a call center in the high tech metropolis of Gurgaon, India, Aneesh observed the difficulties these workers face in bridging cultures, laws, and economies: having to speak in an accent that does not betray their ethnicity, location, or social background; learning foreign social norms; and working graveyard shifts to accommodate international customers. Call center work is cast as independent of place, space, and time, and its neutrality – which Aneesh defines as indifference to difference – has become normal business practice in a global economy. The work of call center employees in the globally integrated marketplace comes at a cost, however, as they become disconnected from the local interactions and personal relationships that make their lives anything but neutral. For more information about the book, you can listen to interviews with Prof. Aneesh on Boom Podcast on Phone Work or CaMP Anthropology.



Grad Students Hone Resumés and Job Hunting Skills

In February, many of our students (mostly MA students) attended an in-house workshop on writing a resumé and conducting a job search. The workshop took place in two stages. We first had the good fortune of receiving expert advice from Dr. Cynthia Petrites, Assistant Director of Alumni Career Services at UWM, about how to compile a successful resumé, with additional recommendations for job hunting. We then welcomed our alumna Molly Poppie, now Vice President of Data Analysis at Nielsen, and our esteemed Professor Emerita Nancy Mathiowetz, to discuss strategies for seeking employment after graduation with an MA, or for PhD students interested in pursuing work outside of academia. Alumnus Kyle Poppie, also with Nielsen, offered additional insights, and we all had a great discussion about transitioning from the MA program to the world of work.



L&S Salutes Mary Schumacher Witt, '69

Every so often, Letters & Science likes to recognize a donor who has generously given to the college. Recently, the College saluted Sociology major Mary Witt.

Witt attended UWM against the background of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement. Sociology seemed a natural fit.

“My interest in the world and the issues that were taking place made me really want to dig into how people function, how groups function, how organizations function, partly with the idea that could provide a great platform if I wanted to do something in terms of changing things,” she said. “I thought Sociology would be a good base.”

Witt graduated in 1969 with a Sociology major, though she had nearly enough credits for a major in History and Political Science as well. She grew up in Wausau, Wis., and transferred to UWM from UW-Marathon County. She loved her time at UWM and still recalls her favorite classes.

“I had a history professor who taught French history, who was excellent. We always used to have interesting discussions there,” she said. “I thought the Sociology classes that I took were really

great classes. Even today, they still serve me well because they covered things like organizational development and systems theory. I use that information every day in my work life.”

Witt is currently a health care consultant, but that’s the latest of many titles she’s held. After she graduated from UWM, Witt worked for the Department of Social Services for Rock County counseling unmarried mothers. She moved to Michigan for her Master’s in Social Work, and then spent her next few years as a social worker in Detroit, a frustrating but rewarding job.

“It was very interesting and I certainly liked it, but it definitely was a challenge. It was in the inner city of Detroit. A lot of the problems these kids were having were related to their dysfunctional families and not a lot of family support,” Witt said. “It was really challenging to me to be in Detroit in the early ’70s when the auto industry was facing its first major challenge from foreign auto companies.”

From there, she began working in the health care field, eventually moving to California. She began consulting in 1993 and is now an independent health care consultant. She’s never forgotten her roots, though, and regularly gives to the Sociology Department to fund student scholarships.

“If it hadn’t been for scholarships and work study at UWM, I wouldn’t have been there. To me, scholarships are very, very important,” Witt said. “If we don’t do that, we’re going to have a whole generation of kids who are not going to have the skills and the education they need to be successful long-term.”

What about you? We want to hear from you.

Did you have a great internship experience or have you been working in your dream job?

We would love to hear from you. Please share your story with us for possible inclusion in future newsletters. Your success is something we are proud of and can serve as an inspiration to others.

Even if you aren’t ready to share your story quite yet, please keep in touch. We would like to make sure we have your email address on file. We promise not to fill your in-box but would like to be able to reach you with important information like job openings that we hear about.

You should have recently received an email from our Alumni Association with your Alumni ID number so that you may review your own profile and update your contact information at alumnidirectory.uwm.edu. Or, you can send your contact information to let-sci@uwm.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you!



INTERVIEW WITH PROF. TIMOTHY O'BRIEN AND PROF. CELESTE CAMPOS-CASTILLO

For this issue of the newsletter, we decided to have the two newest members of the faculty interview each other. Dr. Celeste Campos-Castillo joined us in Fall 2014, and Dr. Timothy O'Brien joined us in Fall 2015. We are delighted to welcome them both to the department, and wanted everyone to have a chance to get to know them a little better. We start with Dr. O'Brien's questions for Dr. Campos-Castillo.



Dr. Celeste Campos-Castillo
Assistant Professor, UWM
Sociology

one program in sociology. I was looking for specific faculty to work with, based on their research, and there was one professor I wanted to work with who happened to be in a sociology department. I got accepted and said, "why not?" I plan many things to achieve my goals as an academic, but I appreciate chance as well.

Now that you've had a few semesters to settle in, how would you describe your experiences at UWM so far?

I love the students. They're hardworking both inside and outside of the university. Their rich experiences outside of the university are what make class discussions so interesting.

If you could choose anyone in the world to have dinner with, who would you choose and why?

Erving Goffman. We wouldn't say much, however. All we would do is sit and watch people together. I'm a people watcher, and he was so good at identifying the most extraordinary things in everyday things.

T.O. to C.C.:

When you were a student, what drew you to sociology? When did you know you wanted to become a sociologist?

Chance drew me into sociology. As an undergraduate student, I majored in psychology and never once took a course in sociology. When it came time to select graduate programs, I selected several programs in psychology and only

What advice do you have for recent sociology graduates (or soon-to-be graduates) about putting their sociology training into practice?

Remember to continue to question what is considered the "norm." Sociology offers students an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of what underlies patterns of behavior. Sometimes these patterns are beneficial, but other times they are actually unjust. Organizations appreciate people who can think outside of the box and offer ways to improve existing conditions. That's why we're always encouraging you to participate in class discussion! It's a good way to practice speaking up.



Dr. Timothy O'Brien
Assistant Professor, UWM
Sociology

me something new to take away. But what may be more important if I'm choosing a book to be deserted with is that I always learn something new when I go back to re-read a Vonnegut novel. I've heard some people describe Vonnegut as a science fiction writer and to some extent I understand where that comes from (he does write a lot about time-travel and aliens). But I think that the sci-fi stuff is just a vehicle to explore other issues, and I think that focusing too much on the aliens and time-travel ignores some of the bigger, and in my view more important, themes that tie his work together. For example, many of his books explore themes related to morality, agency and free-will, consciousness, and what it means to be human and to live among humans. These issues are certainly sociologically relevant and Vonnegut's work on them was part of the reason I became a sociologist.

C.C. to T.O.:

You are stranded in a deserted island. Which one book would you have and why?

Anything by Kurt Vonnegut. He was a prolific writer and I've drawn a lot of inspiration from his work over the years. I've read many, if not most, of the novels, short stories, essays, and other things that he has written although each piece gives

But sociology aside, I think he deals with themes whose importance is much bigger than sociology and are worthwhile to consider for everyone.

If you could recommend only one movie to an undergraduate student interested in majoring in sociology that would convince them about why sociology is so important, which one would it be and why?

I'm not sure what movie I'd suggest, but if I could recommend a novel that illustrates that value of sociology it would definitely be John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. So, I guess the movie adaptation of that (although I've never seen it)? The reason that I think *The Grapes of Wrath* is such a beautiful illustration of how sociology can inform other fields is that it provides a constant back-and-forth between the struggles of a particular family during the Great Depression and the larger historical scene in which the family is situated. In other words, it's a classic example of putting to work the sociological imagination, as described by C. Wright Mills. No spoilers here, but if you haven't read the book, it is written so that one chapter zooms in on the story of a particular family of tenant farmers in Oklahoma during the dust bowl, and then the next chapter zooms out to describe how the lives of millions of families were transformed by the crisis. The whole book unfolds in this back-and-forth conversation between the individual and the societal levels and it provides a remarkable literary example of how to analyze personal troubles in terms of social issues. What's more is that the particular issues Steinbeck writes about are ones of incredible – and lasting – sociological importance. The story is set against the backdrop of the Great Depression and the massive westward migration of farm workers out of the Great Plains. So not only does Steinbeck provide an illustration of a sociological analysis, he writes eloquently about enduring sociological issues like poverty, inequality, migration, and rapid social and economic transformations, issues that remain central to our discipline today.

What is your favorite research study to teach to undergraduate students and why?

I've been fortunate to have had the chance to teach a range of undergraduate classes, both requirements and electives, and upper and lower division courses. I like teaching different classes for different reasons, but if I had to choose one, it would probably be Introduction to Sociology. For me, teaching Intro is really exciting because so few of the students come to the class with a clear understanding of what sociology is let alone what it has to offer. So, Intro gives me the chance to be an ambassador to our discipline. Since it's a survey course, it can be frustrating at times that we have to move so quickly over such big topics. But, by that same token it's exciting to cover so much terrain over the course of a single

semester. And all along the way, I remind students that if they want to learn more about what we're talking about during any given class – whether it be gender, race, culture, deviance, or something else – our department has entire classes devoted to each of these topics. So, in that sense, I think Intro can be a good way to raise interest in Sociology and attract more students to our field.

If you could travel to any planet in the solar system, which one would it be and why?

I guess it would have to be Mars because it seems like the next step in space exploration and it also seems the most doable. Even just a decade or two ago, I think the idea of humans traveling to Mars was almost unimaginable to a lot of people. But given the promise of the probes humans have landed on Mars and everything we've learned from the International Space Station about long-term living in space it seems like humans may actually travel to the Red Planet in the next generation or two. If that happened, imagine how much we could learn about our place in the solar system and in the universe! If I had the opportunity to make the trip, it would be hard to turn down.

Resources and Connections:

Do you have a new address, a new job, a new career accomplishment, or some other good news that you would like to share with us? We want to make sure we have your most recent contact information.

Please fill out the alumni update form (<https://alumnidirectory.uwm.edu/>), and browse our Alumni Association site (<http://www4.uwm.edu/alumni/index.cfm>) for more information about the benefits available to you as one of our valued alumni.

If you don't already have an established UWM Alumni online account, you will need your alumni ID number to create one. Your ID number is on the back of your alumni magazine or you can request your ID at alumni@uwm.edu.

Please also be sure to like our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/uwmsociology/>). And, if you are an alum of our graduate program, please also consider joining us on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/5038057/profile>)



What do you see as some of the most exciting things about our undergraduate program these days?

Providing a critical skill set for a knowledge based economy, including a really strong focus on research skills and statistical applications! We are also doing a great job with elective courses capturing some of the biggest issues today – the health care system, work/family, contemporary race relations, and many other vital topics. All of this background definitely prepares people to be engaged citizens, and to live and work in a diverse world.



Dr. Noelle Chesley
Associate Professor & Director of
Undergraduate Studies,
UWM Sociology

What have some of our graduates gone on to do?

All kinds of things! Some recent examples include jobs in HR, focusing on workplace diversity, demographic trends, and other social aspects of the work world. We have graduates doing research-based work for insurance companies, people who are consultants, and many students working for non-

profits. We also have many students go on to MA and PhD programs, including our own graduate programs.

What are some of your favorite things about teaching sociology undergraduates?

I love so many things about teaching them! They're really engaged, really interested in the subject matter, and interested in how what they're learning in class translates beyond the institution, to their personal lives and their work lives. I have a really positive vision of our student body – really hard-working and conscientious, completely the opposite of what you hear about millennials. They are very respectful of each other, and very open to all of the different ways of being an undergraduate. In my class on the Sociology of Aging, for example, there are a lot of young people, but there are also a lot of older non-traditional students, and they are able to talk about their different life experiences. Everyone really appreciates those differences, and has run with them in such interesting ways. My faith in the next generation is renewed just about every time I teach a class.

What are some of the challenges facing undergraduates today?

The challenges our students face are not unique to sociology – they have to balance a lot of responsibilities, while doing a lot of work! And the budget situation is a big challenge facing any UWM student.

What is one piece of advice you wish you had heard when you were an undergraduate?

One piece that is important for everybody is to really try to establish relationships while they're here – with faculty, with other sociology students. You never think about how, in a couple years, that person is going to get a job and could be part of your professional network. Use the sociology Facebook page and stay in contact with the department after you graduate – build your networks! Your undergraduate years offer a really unique opportunity to connect to people who share your interests, and who can also support you as you head out into the work world or graduate study.

Conference Report: Prof. Cary Costello

In October 2015, Prof. Cary Costello participated in a symposium organized by Drs. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson and Elizabeth Reis, entitled *The Problem of Intersex Frogs: A Seminar on Feminism, Disability, and Environmental Justice*. Sponsored by the University of Michigan Institute for Research on Women and Gender, this event brought ten scholars who work in the areas of disability, sex variance, and environmental justice together to try to generate new ways to address the relationship between human impacts on the environment and variant bodies.

There is a real conflict in progressive advocacy and scholarship between environmentalists who speak in horror of a world in which toxins produce deformity, and writers in disability and intersex studies who seek respect and acceptance for embodied diversity. A vivid example of this is in much-publicized studies purporting to find that more frogs and fish are now intersex, this being proof of environmental damage. These studies gloss over the fact that intersexuality is a natural part of embodied diversity in all species, and imagine a pre-anthropocene world of an untroubled sex-binary and bodies that conform to ideal types.



As Prof. Costello reports, "Participating in this symposium was truly a highlight of my intellectual career. It's sad how rare it is that I've been gathered together with an interdisciplinary group of scholars to generate theory and strategies for addressing a problem over a period of several days of intensive sharing of our work and learning about how issues

are framed across a variety of fields. (We were basically locked into a Holiday Inn the whole time, which was a bit odd, but worth it!)"

The Sociology community has been very active this year, publishing our research, speaking to both popular and academic audiences, being interviewed on podcasts, websites, the radio, and television, and presenting at conferences and symposia. Here is a selection of this year's accomplishments:

Prof. Celeste Campos-Castillo, Daniel J. Bartholomay (current PhD student), **Elisabeth F. Callahan** ('15, MA, Sociology), and Denise L. Anthony (Vice Provost and Professor of Sociology at Dartmouth College) have an article forthcoming in the journal *Society and Mental Health* titled "Depressive Symptoms and Electronic Messaging with Health Care Providers."

Prof. Noelle Chesley gave an invited talk on big data, technology use, and employee well-being at the University of Sheffield's Management School in Britain; (<http://management.sheffield.ac.uk/events/esrc-seminar-series-2/>). She was interviewed and cited in the December issue of *Cosmopolitan* about her work on changing gender roles in the family. She also wrote a blog post about the rise of at-home fathers and breadwinner mothers in fall: <https://gendersociety.wordpress.com/2014/12/22/can-more-full-time-fathers-and-breadwinner-mothers-unstall-the-revolution/>. Finally, at the June Work Family Researchers Conference in Washington D.C. she will be part of a panel discussing the future directions of research on gender and work and will also present preliminary findings on her work investigating how families' technology practices impact family life quality.

In the OUPblog interview, entitled "The Politics of Science Funding," **Prof. Gordon Gauchat** addresses the issue of science funding and shares his thoughts on the importance of public perceptions of science, climate science, and social science. Arne L. Kalleberg (UNC at Chapel Hill) based his interview with Assistant Professor Gordon Gauchat on Gauchat's recent *Social Forces* article, "The Political Context of Science in the United States: Public Acceptance of Evidence-Based Policy and Science Funding," Oxford University Press.

Prof. Oriol Miroso recently published the article "Water Affordability in the United States: An Initial Exploration and an Agenda for Research." *Sociological Imagination* 51(2):35-67. <http://mirosa.org/files/miroso-2015.pdf>

Prof. Emerita Joan Moore was recently honored at an event at the University of Illinois-Chicago. The program, titled "Honoring Joan Moore Through her Students: Latino Gang Research: Findings, Methodology, and Implications" was sponsored by the UIC Great Cities Institute on March 11. See <https://greatcities.uic.edu/event/honoring-joan-moore-through-her-students/>.

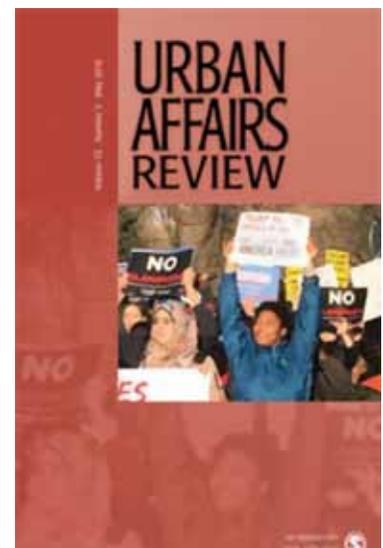
Prof. Jennifer Jordan continues to lecture and conduct interviews about her recent book, *Edible Memory: The Lure of Heirloom Tomatoes and other Forgotten Foods*. She has recently given invited lectures at Colgate University, the University of Illinois-Chicago, Northwestern University, University of California-San Diego, UW Madison, UC Berkeley, and the Pacific Grove Public Library. You can listen to her talk about *Edible Memory* at: <http://radiowest.kuer.org/post/edible-memory> or read more about the book in an interview she did with NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/hesalt/2015/09/04/437268810/why-are-we-drawn-to-heirloom-fruits-and-veggies-theyre-edible-memory>.

Prof. Timothy L O'Brien has an article forthcoming with *Public Understanding of Science* entitled "Gender Differences in Support for Expert Advisers and Elected Officials in the United States Public Sphere." He also recently published another article, "Judging Expertise: Gender and the Negotiation of Expert Authority in Court." *Social Currents*, published online before print March 9, 2016 DOI: 10.1177/2329496516636403

Prof. Aki Roberts recently published two articles in the journal *Homicide Studies*: "Adjusting Rates of Homicide Clearance Arrest for Investigation Difficulty: Modeling Incident-and Jurisdiction Obstacles" 19, 273-300; and, with Dale Willits, "Income Inequality and Homicide in the United States: Consistency Across Different Income Inequality Measures and Disaggregated Homicide Types." 19, 28-57.

In addition, **Prof. Aki Roberts and Prof. John Roberts** have a forthcoming article, "Crime clearance and temporal variation in police investigative workload: Evidence from National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data" in the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*.

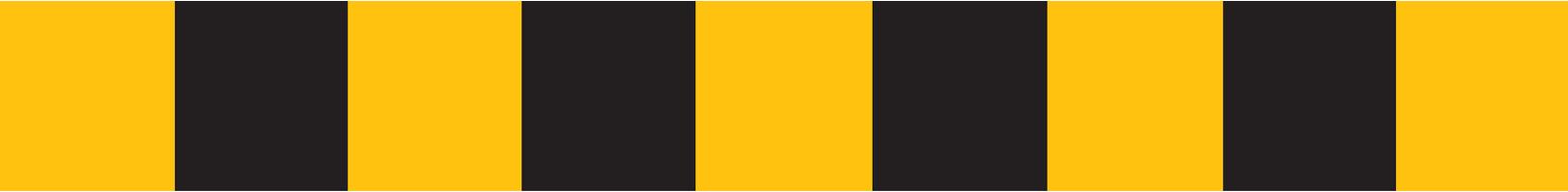
Prof. William Velez recently published an article with Pat Goldsmith, Pat Rubio, Prof. Marcus Britton, & Bruce Reese, titled "Will Moving to a Better Neighborhood Help? Teenage Residential Mobility, Change of Context, and Young-Adult Educational Attainment." *Urban Affairs Review*, 2016 (available at uar.sagepub.com, DOI: 10.1177/1078087416634899).





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