Greetings friends and alumni of the UWM Department of Sociology!

Dear friends, alumni, colleagues:

As we look out on the seemingly constant conflicts in our society and politics, it is easy to forget that Sociology is a discipline borne in hope. Hope that through systematic humanistic and scientific analysis we can better understand our world. And, by better understanding it, create opportunities for changing, enhancing, and improving that world.

As we close the book on my first year back as department chair, after a five-year hiatus, I am happy to report that the work of UWM Sociology embodies that hope now more than ever. Sure, we’re smaller than we were five years ago, and we have had to say goodbye to too many wonderful colleagues. I especially want to note the most recent retirements of esteemed colleagues, teachers, and mentors, William Vélez and Donald Green.

And yet we are also larger and better too. Our PhD program is now finishing its sixth year and is going strong, having recently received at “A” rating from a duo of external reviewers. Six students have now earned their doctorates from the program, including Matt McCarthy, who is now employed as a data scientist at Harley Davidson and featured in an interview in this newsletter. Current student Daniel Bartholomay just won a highly competitive UWM Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship for 2018-19 (see story inside with a longer list of accomplishments by sociology students and faculty). Meanwhile, our Masters program continues to generate highly-skilled graduates and our undergraduate program continues to be in the top 10 of the 41 majors offered within the College of Letters and Science.

Because of generous support from alumni this year, for the first time we were able to offer scholarship funds for our award-winning graduate students, including Daniel Bartholomay (Best Graduate Student Paper Award) and Stephanie Baran (Best Graduate Student Teaching Award). Moreover, we were able to also enhance the awards given for our Distinguished Undergraduate Scholar awards, this year given to Florencia Gould-Potker and Bernadette Swanson. We hope to continue to be able to reward such high-achieving students but to do so, we need your support. Please consider giving to our Scholarship Fund; donations of any size help support our wonderful students!

You’ll find lots more in this issue of the newsletter, so read on! Let me thank Timothy O’Brien for editing this newsletter. And please reconnect with us on our facebook page (facebook.com/UWMSociology), webpage (https://uwm.edu/sociology/), or by email (sociology@uwm.edu). We love to hear from alumni and want to know what you are up to in your careers so that we can share your experiences our students. In fact, in this issue we profile two of our alumni, Emily Phillips and Matt McCarthy, both living proof of the wonderful things you can do with a UWM sociology degree.

Kent Redding, Chair
Department of Sociology
NEWS FROM AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

New Certificate: Quantitative Social Data Analysis

After taking Sociology 261 (Introduction to Statistical Thinking in Sociology), some students become interested in learning more advanced statistics and data analysis skills, and obtaining a formal credential for post-graduation employment. We are happy to announce that Sociology, with Political Science, is starting the “Quantitative Social Data Analysis” (QSDA) certificate program. The certificate requires the completion of 5 statistics/research method courses (15-18 credit hours) from 10 different social science departments, including sociology. A GPA of 3.0 or above is required for eligibility.

Examples of Sociology courses on the list are Sociology 261, 361 (Research Methods in Sociology), 461 (Social Data Analysis with Regression), and 452 (Social Network Analysis). Interested students should contact Dr. Aki Roberts (Sociology, aki@uwm.edu) or Dr. Thomas Holbrook (Political Science, holbrook@uwm.edu). We hope to hear from many interested students!

Prof. Aneesh Aneesh

Prof. Aneesh Aneesh guest edited a special issue on Global Techno-Assemblages of the journal, Science, Technology and Society (Sage, volume 22:1), with Amit Prasad. He also published an article with D.J. Wolover (PhD ’18) titled “Citizenship and Inequality in a Global Age,” in Sociology Compass, Volume 11, Issue 5, May 2017. And, he was invited to a specialist seminar to address the challenges to democratic societies in the face of emergent authoritarian movements at the Central European University in Budapest, April 2018.

Prof. Noelle Chesley

Prof. Noelle Chesley (with W. Hobart Davies in Psychology and Jake Luo in Health Informatics and Administration) received a grant from UWM to build a collaborative research team focused on bringing together social and big data scientists to engage research questions at the intersection of technology and health (https://people.uwm.edu/techealth/). Prof. Chesley has been actively involved in the activities of this group during the 2017-18 academic year and hosted workshops in both fall and spring to build and strengthen research collaborations across campus and with scientists outside UWM.

Prof. Chesley also launched a data collection effort this spring to better understand perceptions and attitudes related to water quality issues, especially concerns about lead contamination in drinking water and use of external water filters as a consumer response. She has engaged in local conversations about how the City of Milwaukee should deal with concerns about lead exposure through drinking water and is currently pursuing funding to conduct an evaluation of a local program that provides external water filters to city residents.

Prof. Chesley continues to speak on issues related to gender and work and was an invited panelist for a community “talk back” event focused on sexual harassment hosted by the Women’s Fund of Milwaukee in Fall of 2017. She was also invited to speak at the Boston College Workforce Roundtable in Chicago in May 2017 to discuss her published research on shifting gender roles.
Prof. Gordon Gauchat

Prof. Gordon Gauchat published three papers in 2017-2018 on the topic of public perceptions of science. The first, “The Cultural-Cognitive Mapping of Scientific Professions” is forthcoming in American Sociological Review. Building on recent research on occupational prestige and political attitudes, this paper provides an innovative approach to measuring cultural-cognitive maps using public opinion data. The approach uses Exploratory Structural Models to predict cultural-cognitive affinities (or schema) given the relations between individual responses to survey questions. In addition, Prof. Gauchat has a forthcoming paper in Nature about future directions in public perceptions research, emphasizing the study of climate scientists in relation to other cultural authorities. He also published a paper on perceptions of climate scientists in the prestigious journal of Climatic Change along with Timothy L. O’Brien and Oriol Mirosa. This paper contributes to our knowledge about how various publics (or social locations) perceive the fidelity and credibility of climate scientists.

Prof. Timothy L. O’Brien

Prof. Timothy L. O’Brien published several articles this year in journals including Social Science Research, Social Science Quarterly, Law, Probability, and Risk, The Sociological Quarterly (with Shiri Noy), and Climatic Change (with Gordon Gauchat and Oriol Mirosa). In 2017, he was elected to a three-year term as council member on the ASA Science, Knowledge, and Technology Section. He also presented papers at the 2017 American Sociological Association meetings in Montreal and the 2018 meetings of the Midwest Sociological Society in Minneapolis.

Prof. Jennifer Jordan

Prof. Jennifer Jordan received an advance contract from the University of Chicago Press for her third book, “Before Craft Beer: Lost Landscapes of Forgotten Hops.”

Prof. Jordan will be a consultant on a recently funded Humanities Without Walls grant titled “Hydrologies of the Anthropocene.” She will be researching changing perceptions of rivers in Illinois and Wisconsin over the past two centuries, working with colleagues at the University of Illinois Chicago and the University of Wisconsin Madison.

Jenna Nitekowski


DaJuan Ferrell

DaJuan Ferrell (PhD student) has a forthcoming article in Research in the Sociology of Health Care (“Understanding the Impact of Gender in the Decision-Making Process to Undergo Surgeries”).
Daniel Bartholomay

Daniel Bartholomay published two papers, one in *Teaching Sociology* ("Making Room for Methods: Incorporating Full-scale Research Projects in Non-methods Courses"), and one in *Sociology Compass* ("What, exactly, are we measuring? Examining heteronormativity in relation to same-gender marriage.") Daniel received a SAGE Teaching Innovations & Professional Development Award in both 2017 and 2018, and in 2018 he was awarded the AKD Teaching and Learning Fellowship. In 2017, he won the UWM Sociology department’s graduate student teaching award, and in 2018 he won the UWM Sociology department’s graduate student research paper award. Finally, Daniel was awarded a 2018-2019 UWM Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship.

Michael Miner

Michael Miner (‘17 MA, current PhD student) won an AOP fellowship from UWM in 2017 and was selected for a summer 2018 internship in quantitative research at Facebook. Michael also presented a paper at the 2018 Midwest Sociological Society Meetings in Minneapolis ("Disaggregating the Monolithic Category: Citizenship and Choice of Academic Discipline Among STEM Graduate Students"), and was awarded first prize in the 2018 MSS Barbara J. Johnston Student Paper Competition ("Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, and the Shortage in Primary Healthcare: Professional Autonomy in the Public Discourse").

2018 UWM Sociology Awards Ceremony Awardees

Left to right: Rachel Olson, Kacee Rai Ochalek, Bernadette Swanson, Daniel Bartholomay, Prof. Noelle Chesley, Florencia Gould-Potoker.

Prof. Emeritus Frank Wilson

Stephanie Baran
Matthew T. McCarthy earned his MA in sociology from UWM in 2012 and went on to earn his PhD in sociology from UWM in 2017. As a graduate student, Matt published award-winning research in journals including *Sociological Forum, Science, Technology, and Society, Sociology Compass*, and he taught classes on social theory and globalization. Currently, he is lead data scientist at Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee. We caught up with him to ask about his time at UWM, and how his training in sociology fits into the work he does now as a data scientist.

**How would you describe your experience as a graduate student in UWM’s sociology department?**

I really enjoyed my experience there, and it was personally transformative in too many ways to list. Being a graduate student for so many years is a privilege not to be taken for granted. It was a pretty exceptional thing to be able to read, write, and discuss very abstract and cutting-edge theories as a profession. It allowed for intellectual and personal development in a way that very few people get to experience. For me, I had terrific support from Aneesh and other key members of the department, some who have since retired. This helped me feel confident enough in my own skill set and knowledge base to stave off the deepest throes of imposter syndrome making me comfortable extending my research program beyond what I found to be the sometimes limiting confines of sociology as a discipline. In all, that made my work more interesting as well as making me a better sociologist and scholar. Still, at times the experience could be isolating and anxiety-ridden. This was particularly the case while publishing and while writing my dissertation. However, those aspects were really where a good portion of my learning came from, as there is a certain degree of self-reliance that comes from having to produce at a professional level. I was given a lot of good advice, but at some point, it was simply up to me to figure things out.

**How did you end up working for Harley Davidson?**

My wife has a good and very unique career that she works remarkably hard at and is quite successful in. Problematically, it is not particularly mobile. That is in direct conflict with academic careers, which require that you are open to moving anywhere in the country. It simply was not fair or right for me to expect her to sacrifice her hard work for my own, especially where her profession is even more specialized than an academic who studies data and technology. Knowing this, I began teaching myself the skills needed for data science early in my dissertation phase. I had the background in statistics and learning the coding and machine learning was not too difficult. It was actually a good respite from writing my dissertation. I already had a good deal of knowledge about data science and machine learning from my academic work on big data and data infrastructure, so the jump intellectually was not so strange, even if the vantage from which I viewed the topic was very different. Once I had my PhD in hand I began applying for jobs in the area, and Harley-Davidson offered the most compelling situation. I did go on the academic job market, but only applying for schools in dream locations is not really a good recipe for success.

**How has your sociology background influenced the work that you do?**

Apart from the more obvious things like good statistical skills and domain knowledge of big data, my background has provided critical thinking skills, the ability to develop research, understanding of data ethics, and wide methodological toolkit. A big part of what I do now, and what I did in graduate school, requires figuring out what the problems are and how to solve them. Cutting through the extraneous details and other people’s business decisions allows me to determine what I think I need to solve and in a way that challenges the sometimes, dogmatic thinking of people in the company who have more domain knowledge than I do. Since I work in a strategy and research group, my main job is to challenge years of thinking in a way that the company and industry have yet to. While in school, I studied data ethics quite a bit, but I now have to live them in a new way. Algorithms will simply reproduce existing social
biases when not carefully designed and checked. Most people in data science do not come from the social sciences and so often are not in tune or concerned with those problems, though. Having that background is very helpful for making sure that my work adheres to my commitment to fairness and transparency in data practices. I also work with the qualitative research team to help them design and analyze their research.

What are your plans for the future?

Right now, I’ll be working here at Harley-Davidson. While I’ve learned a lot, I still have a new profession to master. There are lots of overlaps, but also lots of areas that are entirely new to me. At the moment I am teaching myself additional programming languages and refining my knowledge of the inner workings of advanced machine learning algorithms. Like anything, that just takes a lot of time and practice. When the next applications for the Data Science for Social Good fellowships open, I’ll apply. Eventually, I would like to work in a content area that more closely relates to my academic work, but for now, I am content to learn and develop. Also, my position at Harley is very comfortable, has a tremendous deal of autonomy, and perhaps most importantly, does not make me feel like I’m doing bad or unethical things.

What advice would you offer current graduate students in sociology?

Have a backup plan in case you have any doubts about going into academia. It’s a hard job market and having options is nice. If you have any quantitative skills, nurture them. They are incredibly valuable inside and outside of the academy. At a bare minimum, you’ll know more. Also, with the skills you learn in UWM’s Sociology program, you’ll have more knowledge of applied statistics than most people you work with if you leave academia.

No doubt you’ve heard this before, but publish as much as possible. It is really not so bad and feels awesome when you get your first one. Try to get at least a couple CV lines each year as proof of academic productivity. It will also help you build a resume for the non-academic world if you end up going that direction.

Writing a dissertation is stressful but relax and enjoy it if you can. You’ll probably feel like an imposter, but even the knowledge that you know you don’t know something is a good thing. Keep writing and do it every day. It is a big undertaking and just doing a few pages a day adds up. I started writing in January and wrote five hours a day four days a week until I finished in early April. Some days, I wrote just three pages, some days I wrote ten. As long as you make your “quota” you’ll make progress. It all happens pretty quickly. Anticipating your defense is stressful but remember that you are the expert. The actual defense itself isn’t so bad.

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 may review your own profile and update your contact information at alumnidirectory.uwm.edu. Or, you can send your updated contact information to let-sci@uwm.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you!
Emily Phillips

Emily Phillips earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and history from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2007. Currently, she is a Financial Advisor and Partner in the Drosner Phillips Group at Baird Private Wealth Management in Milwaukee. She also serves on the National Board of Directors for the Executive Women Golf Association as Treasurer, the Board of Directors for Professional Dimensions as President Elect. Emily is a 2017 Milwaukee Business Journal 40 under 40 award recipient and a 2016 UWM Tedx speaker. She passionately engages in a variety of charities, donating time and energy to the greater Milwaukee community. We caught up with her to ask her about her time at UWM and how her background in sociology has helped her get to where she is today.

How would you describe your experience as a student in the sociology department at UWM?

My experience as a student in the Sociology department was shaped early on by professors Dr. Stacey Olker and Dr. Mark Mantyh among others. They taught me to approach content with a healthy dose of skepticism and a problem solving mindset which went beyond a grade; it became a skill set I employ today as my job relies heavily upon research, logic and critical thinking.

How did you end up working for RW Baird?

I was recruited from management consulting to become a business development asset to the team and learn how to be a portfolio manager. My business partner and I met at a Professional Dimensions event and as soon as we started a conversation, my intellectual curiosity led me to my role today as an advisor.

How has your sociology background influenced your work and career?

In the investment world, financial planning is based on building secure financial futures by architecting a blueprint for clients to follow in their day-to-day life. My background in Sociology prepared me to understand structures, systems and human behavior which tends to be much less formulaic than economists would have you believe and in order to navigate the complexities of life’s unknowns, I use the same methodical approach to trends and patterns in our financial markets and human behavior that I learned in college.

What are your plans for the future?

My plans for the future include becoming a top producer at my firm in order to leverage my success to continue to best serve my clients and make the community a better place. I believe that profits can be used to influence positive outcomes for all individuals, not only those of privilege.

What advice would you offer current sociology students?

Take the time to pay attention to the students around you, the greater meaning and application of your classes beyond the short term. Find ways to contribute back to the program and stay in touch with your professors because they have a lot of insight and the willingness to share that insight outside of the curriculum.

Student Honors

- **Phi Beta Kappa Class of 2018** - In April 2018, Sociology major and graduating senior Allison Schweinert was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Class of 2018. Phi Beta Kappa is the nation’s oldest honor society that recognizes exceptional academic achievement in a breadth of liberal arts coursework.

- **Fall 2017 Dean’s Honors List** – The following Sociology majors were placed on the Dean’s Honor List for Fall 2017. Students must earn a minimum 3.75 semester GPA on at least 12 graded credits to achieve this honor:

  - Sarah Biehn
  - Florencia Gould-Potoker
  - Alexandra Habeck
  - Macy Hennen
  - Lily Khang
  - Stephanie Nordseth
  - Shauna O’Keefe
  - Rachel Olson
  - Allison Schweinert
  - Hannah Smith
  - Bernadette Swanson
  - Allison Weber
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