Greetings friends, alumni, and colleagues! 2018-19 has been a busy year for Sociology. All three of our assistant professors (Celeste Campos-Castillo, Gordon Gauchat, and Timothy O’Brien) have been recommended for tenure and promotion to associate professor for the fall of 2019. They have each been terrific contributors to our teaching, research, and service missions and we are thrilled to have them at UWM for the long-term. Our new undergraduate interdisciplinary program in Quantitative Social Data Analysis has launched and is now enrolling undergraduates, thanks to the efforts of Prof. Aki Roberts. And, as usual, we have educated many students on the wonders of the “sociological imagination” and all the skills and insights that go with it, with nearly 3,000 enrolling in our courses during 2018-19. They have each been

I will be stepping down as department chair in August to return to teaching, but I am happy to report that the job will pass to the able hands of Prof. Jennifer Jordan, a long-time faculty member. Profs. Noelle Chesley and John Roberts will stay on as Director of Undergraduate Studies and Director of Graduate Studies, respectively.

Our PhD program continues to flourish. Seven students have now earned their doctorates from the program. Current student Michael Miner just won a highly competitive UWM Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship for 2019-20. As always, our Master’s 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, we have for the second year been able to offer scholarship funds for our best undergraduate students. This year our Distinguished Undergraduate Scholar award was given to Hannah Smith and Madeline Allen, while Pilar Olvera received the Joan W. Moore Service-Scholar award at the annual UWM Sociology Undergraduate Awards & AKD Ceremony on April 11. We are very pleased to have Hannah join our Master’s program in the fall. This year Thomas Calkins, who recently completed his Sociology PhD, won the department’s Best Graduate Student Paper Award. We hope to continue to be able to reward such high achieving students for years to come but we need your support. Please consider giving to our Scholarship Fund; donations of any size help support our terrific students!

You’ll find lots more in this issue of the newsletter so read on! Let me thank Timothy O’Brien for again serving as newsletter editor. Please reconnect with us on our Facebook page (UWM Sociology), webpage (uwm.edu/sociology), or by email (sociology@uwm.edu). We appreciate hearing from alumni and want to know what you are up to in your careers so that we can share your experiences our students. In this issue we profile two of our alumni who are both great examples of how a UWM sociology degree can lead to a wonderful career.

Kent Redding, Chair

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CHRIS HENKE, ’92 BA

From UWM, Chris went on to earn a PhD in sociology from the University of California, San Diego (2000). Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, where since 2001 he has taught classes about science and technology, work, the environment, and research methods. His first book, *Cultivating Science, Harvesting Power*, (2008, MIT Press) focuses on the relationship between agricultural scientists and the farm industry in California’s Salinas Valley. He is currently completing a new book project on the politics of infrastructures (co-authored with colleague and friend Ben Sims; forthcoming from MIT Press).

How did you come to choose sociology as a major? What made you decide to go on to study sociology in graduate school?

I came to UWM in 1987 as a pre-engineering major and was sure that I was going to be an electrical engineer. At the time, most engineering students took around 5 years to complete their degrees, and I actually completed 4 grinding years of the engineering curriculum before I changed my major to sociology. During my first year at UWM I had taken the Intro to Sociology course with Professor John Zipp, and I really loved it. I was getting more interested in politics and what today we’d term social justice; Prof. Zipp presented a lot of data about the state of the U.S. that really opened my eyes to the politics of the time and the power of the sociological imagination for seeing these trends as both social science and policy questions.

Switching to sociology after investing several years in engineering was really hard at the time but ultimately among the best decisions I ever made. Nothing against engineering, but sociology was the right choice for me, and I was so excited to finally have the chance to take more courses. That excitement carried me through the two years needed to complete my sociology degree and spurred me to explore postgraduate degrees, too. In addition to sociology, I also took several philosophy courses, and became very interested in the intersection of science, epistemology, and social institutions, which led me to apply to PhD programs in the growing interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies (STS). So, in the end, I don’t consider my engineering courses “wasted” per se, but instead an experience that led me to become interested in the interface of science and society.

How would you describe your experience as an undergrad in the sociology department at UWM?

I loved all my sociology courses and had really strong support from the UWM sociology faculty. I give special credit to Professor Stacey Oliker, who was the undergraduate advisor when I moved to the sociology major. She helped me plan an independent study that allowed me to explore the literature in STS and gave me really good advice about graduate programs. The paper I wrote for that independent study was an important bridge to my work in grad school. I also appreciated the range of sociological subfields that the UWM sociology faculty taught courses in, and the commitment to action emphasized through some of my assignments. One TA encouraged us to stage a protest during a lecture to demand more input on course assignments, as a way of getting some practical experience in how to participate in social movements. Professor Don Noel asked us to explore policy solutions for a research paper on social change. I think this approach attracted an incredible mix of fellow students, too, with a range of student backgrounds and talents that I have not found in other classrooms or departments where I’ve been a student or teacher since.

What are your plans for the future?

I’m blessed to be on sabbatical in the current academic year, and working on a book project about infrastructures – roads, bridges, food systems, computer networks – the kinds of stuff tucked away behind a wall or behind the scenes that we don’t always think about, but that shape our everyday lives through their material form and cultural and political structures. Hopefully, that book will come out within the next year or so; the book’s tentative title is *Repairing Infrastructures: The Maintenance of Materiality and Power* and will be published by MIT Press. In my work at Colgate, I’ve had some recent opportunities to turn my research, teaching, and service toward a community-based model that helps support the needs of our neighbors in Central New York. That has allowed me to develop close connections with campus and community partners around issues related to food security and climate change planning, and I will continue to work on these topics in coming years. Community-based work is really rewarding, but also sometimes hard to reconcile with the demands of traditional academic work, such as publishing papers. UWM’s sociology department has been a leader in this area, so I encourage students to take advantage of opportunities for community-based work in Milwaukee.
What advice would you offer current sociology students?

In my Intro to Sociology course, Prof. Zipp gave us a piece of advice that I will never forget: “You don’t get an education, you take an education.” He encouraged us to be active students and not wait for a teacher to give us instructions about what to learn. UWM is a great school with amazing resources to learn about any topic, and the great thing about sociology is that we can study anything. I always tell my students that everything is part of society. Pick a topic that really interests you and dig in deeply. You might be able to do this by taking a class, but you can also go to the library and find books and articles on your own (make sure to ask a research librarian for their advice — they are the best!). I know that many students at UWM juggle jobs, family, and other commitments in addition to their coursework. In my experience, exploring an intellectual idea or debate has always paid off, sometimes in unexpected ways, because I put in the time to read and write about that topic and found the communities and conversations where I could engage with other people who had the same interests and questions. This might lead some to become a professor, but those conversations are also part of many professional fields, meaning that academic life and professional life are more connected than we sometimes think. “Follow your passions and do what you love” — such clichés! But if following those interests leads you to develop expertise, that will be incredibly valuable to you personally and to the communities who will benefit from your knowledge.

MIKAYLA KINNISON, ’13 BA

Mikayla Kinnison is a Program Associate for the Office of Applied Gerontology, which is part of the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at UWM.

When did you graduate with your sociology degree from UWM? What made you choose to major in sociology?

I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in sociology and women’s and gender studies in December 2013. It may sound a little dismissal, but I think I chose to major in sociology because I wanted to be able to investigate the larger societal forces and institutions behind human suffering and injustice. Sociologists have the tools to identify and treat the cause of any given social problem rather than simply treating the symptoms. That’s just always made sense to me in terms of a strategy for improving the living conditions in our communities.

How would you describe your undergraduate experience in the sociology department at UWM?

Empowering. As a sociology student at UWM, my social consciousness grew tremendously and became strengthened by theory, data, and historical context. My professors challenged me to think critically, to do my research, and to ask the right questions. With their guidance, I developed the ability to engage with complex theoretical concepts and create thoughtful research projects. Some of my professors drew on their knowledge of local history to illustrate lessons on social inequality and social change, which I appreciated very much. Shout out to Professors Noelle Chesley, Mark Mantyh, David Nowacek, and Thomas Moore, who were all especially influential for me.

How has your sociology background influenced your work and career?

In my role within the Office of Applied Gerontology, I use sociological thinking all the time in efforts to connect with and support students. In planning outreach initiatives, it only makes sense to consider the social conditions and identities of our students, because these conditions and identities influence their individual perceptions and behaviors. Do most of our students come from working class backgrounds? How does this influence their study habits? How might their racial or ethnic identities influence their relationship to academia and their professors? Which social media platforms are our students most likely to use based on their age group? These are some of the questions we have to ask ourselves if our efforts to increase program enrollment and encourage student success are going to be fruitful. Because our office seeks to increase the number of students pursuing gerontology education, we also have to consider the preconceived notions that students might have about aging and older adults.

What are your plans for the future?

I’m planning on staying at UWM for a while. The work I do here is rewarding, and it doesn’t leave me feeling mentally or physically drained at the end of each day, which is something I value greatly. I also really enjoy being able to advocate for students at a departmental and campus-wide level. As a UWM alum, it’s very important to me that the university remains accessible to students from all different backgrounds. Working in the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, I’m surrounded by many colleagues who share that same vision. I’m very thankful for that.

What advice would you offer current sociology students?

Take every opportunity you can to learn more about the rich history of Milwaukee and its current social, political, and economic conditions. You’ll be better able to apply the sociological knowledge you’re gaining to what’s going on around you in the city if you have some background on the subject.
**FACULTY AND STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

*Professor Noelle Chesley* spent much of 2018 developing a new line of research investigating how social attitudes and contexts shape public perceptions about the need for and use of water filtration devices. This research is responding to rising concerns across the country about water quality in light of the 2016 Flint water crisis. Along with colleagues W. Hobart Davies (Psychology), Helen Meier (Zilber School of Public Health) and Jake Luo (Health Informatics and Administration), Prof. Chesley conducted a U.S. survey in March 2018 tracking key attitudes and behaviors about water quality and water filter use (funded through a UWM Collaborative Science Grant). She has also been engaged on the topic in the Milwaukee area, participating in local meetings and hearings, and engaging the public through interviews with Wisconsin Public Radio and publishing an op-ed in Urban Milwaukee. Dr. Chesley is continuing to pursue research on the broader social consequences of technological innovation for work and family life, with current projects examining whether and how the rise of big data are reshaping contemporary employment experiences.

*Professor Jennifer Jordan* has been named a member of the international consortium for an ongoing research project based at Linköping University in Sweden, “Revitalization and Sustainability,” which has received a planning grant from the Swedish funder FORMAS – The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning. She will travel to Sweden in May and November to take part in planning workshops for further research and grant-writing on the links between traditional agricultural practices and the sustainability goals of the United Nations.

*PhD student Antonio Paniagua Guzman* presented his research on cultural and economic sociology at the Annual Meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association (Oakland, CA), the Annual Meetings of the Chicago Ethnography Conference (Chicago, IL), and the Annual Meetings of the Southwestern Social Science Association (Orlando, FL).

*PhD student Michael Miner* will complete his second internship as a research scientist at Facebook this summer. In addition, Michael was appointed Student Director and Board Member at the Midwest Sociological Society, and he presented his research on the sociology of education at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, Midwest Sociological Society, and Society for the Study of Social Problems conferences. Michael also was awarded a UWM Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship for the 2019-2020 academic year.

*PhD student Daniel Bartholomay* has been awarded the 2018 Graduate Student Contribution to the Sociological Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award given by the ASA.

*Professor Celeste Campos-Castillo* recently received a grant from the Technology and Adolescent Mental Wellbeing program at UW-Madison to study privacy co-management in social networking sites among Latinx adolescents. In addition, Prof. Campos-Castillo published several articles this year about her research on perceptions of health care providers and technologies in Journal of the National Medical Association, The Sociological Quarterly, and Health Affairs, and she joined the editorial boards at the journals New Media & Society and Social Psychology Quarterly. Prof. Campos-Castillo also gave the keynote address at the Wisconsin Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) Providers Cultural Competency Summit in Milwaukee.

*Recent PhD recipient Thomas Calkins* (’18) published an article based on his dissertation research titled “More Than Sound: Record Stores in Majority Black Neighborhoods in Chicago, Milwaukee, and Detroit, 1970 – 2010” in the journal *City & Community*.

*PhD student Ken Jackson* and recent PhD recipient DJ Wolover (’18) published an article titled “Working Through Uncertainty: The Perils and Potential of Community-Engaged Research on Refugee Resettlement” in the journal *Social Sciences*. 