Student Updates

The ApSoc student body always manages to stay busy. Whether it’s pursuing career goals, or making the most of their time off, our students are sure to seize exciting opportunities as they come along.

The fall began with an orientation at the Harp and Bard in Dorchester. This was an excellent way for the incoming cohort to meet the second year students and faculty. It also gave students a chance to chat with two of our newest professors, Drs. Leslie Wang and Kevin Wozniak. Later in the fall, a group of students and faculty represented the department at the Graduate Student Showcase (pictured to the right).

In addition to socializing, students were busy professionally as well. Jay Byron submitted an article for publication on a qualitative study about the organizational culture of an adolescent inpatient unit. He also was very excited that he and his wife saw Prince over winter break! Lena Campagna had a relaxing break and even got to spend a few days in Los Angeles over New Year’s weekend with her sister and friends. She got to visit Universal Studios, ate delicious food, and enjoyed the beautiful weather on the west coast!

Kate Ryan had a stellar break that included plenty of sleep, seeing great friends, and celebrating the holidays with her family. She was able to make a trip back home to Wisconsin and embarked on her annual New Year’s Winter Camping Trip with her husband, Joe. She admits it was very cold, but they made it through (pictured below). Other than that she enjoyed the football season, reading, and an endless amount of baked goods. Dory Gayler was able to spend the entire winter break back in sunny San Diego (which included a surprise visit by Cristina Brinkerhoff). She managed to spend time with her family, bake a lot of cookies, and see a ton of movies before her last semester of grad school.

Cristina Brinkerhoff spent the break enjoying family and waking up late. She also traveled to Dory Gayler’s hometown, San Diego, CA with a friend (pictured below). Cristina recently started working with professor C. Eduardo Siqueira, associate professor in the College of Public and Community Services (CPCS), in the project “Transnationalism, Network and Culture: Implication for Health & Behavior.”

In January, Jessica LeBlanc found out she had two papers accepted for presentation at the upcoming American Association For Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Conference in Anaheim, California this May. One of her co-presenters/co-authors includes one of the department’s professors, Dr. Philip Brenner.
Student Updates - Continued

We are also very proud of Justine Bulgar-Medina, Jay Byron, Kate Phelps, and Julianne Seigfriedt who will be presenting at the Eastern Sociological Society conference in February!

Students and faculty from the Sociology Department’s Graduate Studies joined over 300 volunteers for the 25th annual Boston homeless census. The volunteers expected temperatures as low as 12 degrees with frigid winds on December 16, 2013. Despite the bitter cold, students and faculty braved into the night to find those that did not have the luxury of a warm home and offer them food, shelter and medical assistance. Students and faculty were divided into two teams to canvas Boston’s T stations. Through the leadership of Prof. Leverentz and ApSoc alumna, Whitney Gecker the two groups covered all Boston train stations and the surrounding areas. Prof. Lagason took her expertise to a law enforcement team. This experience humanizes homelessness since it provides a face to the realities that we study in the classroom. Sociology students and faculty are always looking for opportunities to make the differences and contribute to social change.

In the 2012 Boston homeless census sociology graduate students helped count 6,992 homeless men, women, and children, which revealed a 5.2 percent increase from 2011, according to the health commission.

First Year Students’ Class Project

Students in Foundations of Applied Sociology gain experience as applied sociologists by working on applied research projects that may be continued in the next semester in Methods of Research I.

This fall the Foundations students worked on two projects designed by Professor Russell Schutt and his TA, Julianne Seigfriedt, who is also a sociology doctoral student. One project focused on the Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program at UMass Boston; the other involved learning about the careers of applied sociologists who graduated from our MA program in previous years. Qualitative interviews were the primary method of data collection in both projects.

Veterans Upward Bound is a federally-funded program offered at UMB that provides free education-oriented services to veterans interested in going to college. In addition to preparatory assistance and tutoring, the program provides 16 weeks of academic instruction in a variety of subjects such as Math, English, Writing, Basic Computer Skills, Laboratory Science, Study Skills. Details are available at: http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/support_programs/veterans_upward_bound

After consultation with VUB Director Barry Brodsky, Foundations students interviewed current program faculty and students to learn about their experiences and orientations and to explore the challenges and barriers that affect program completion. A quote from one of the veteran interviews gives an idea of what they found: “At the end of the day, we are all supportive of each other because we are a band of brothers from different services. Veterans are veterans, no matter what it is.”

Interviews with Applied Sociology program graduates yielded very positive comments about their careers: “They had, for the most part, felt professionally fulfilled by the jobs they had taken since graduation.” The following quote from a student’s final paper illustrates the type of insights gained about program operations: “The strong emphasis respondents placed on assistantships that allowed them to apply research skills learned in the classroom to real-world research problems suggested that offering more of those opportunities would be a good use of departmental resources.”

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Faculty Updates

Not to be outdone, our faculty were also quite busy during the fall and over winter break. Prof. Jacobs had an article published — “Localized Globalization: Compliance With and Resistance to Immigrant Marginalization by Latino Community-based Organization in a Gateway City” (Latino Studies, Vol 11, 4).

Prof. Leverentz is excited to announce that her book has been published and it is now available, *The Ex-Prisoner’s Dilemma*. (http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/product/Ex-Prisoners-Dilemma,5109.aspx). She also organized a panel and presented a paper with Monica Williams (Weber State Univ.) at the American Society of Criminology meetings in November. The paper was “Places, politics, and police: Community responses to crime in local context” and the panel was titled “Theorizing the local in responses to crime”.


Prof. Bersani also published an article recently— “A Game of Catch-up? The Offending Experience of Second Generation Immigrants” (Crime and Delinquency). Her article was picked up by the Pew Research Centers “FactTank” and other media outlets, which she was excited to report. And a special welcome to Prof. Bersani’s new twin boys, Isaac Ames and Lucas Kyle!

Program News & Updates

We have a few new courses that are being taught this Spring. Prof. Wozniak is teaching *Issues in Contemporary Social Policy* (642). Prof. Solari is teaching *Gender, Ethnicity, & Migration* (644).

We are also sad to hear that one our administrative assistants, Jacqui Ryan, will be leaving us this week as she has been offered a great position at Bay State College. We wish her the best in her future endeavors!
This exciting **Applied Sociology MA and PhD Program** is perfect for anyone looking for the opportunity to explore and develop their abilities to consider, analyze and contribute to sociological policy, program development, research or the management of social agencies. Our graduates are researchers, managers, instructors, policy analysts, and service providers in health care, social service and criminal justice agencies, and corporate departments throughout the area. In addition to our 2 year MA program, we offer an accelerated, 5-year **BA-to-MA program** for qualified UMass Boston undergraduates providing the chance to complete master’s level study in a more timely way than otherwise possible. Coursework and research experiences will prepare students for outstanding academic careers as well as for leadership roles as applied sociologists in public and private agencies and research organizations. We also offer a **Graduate Certificate in Forensic Services** and a **Graduate Certificate in Survey Research.**