

# SOCIAL CIRCLES

Spring 2013

## Welcome from the Chair

Greetings from Charlotte! We are wrapping up the spring semester, and preparing for our various summer tasks—summer school, study abroad, research, conferences, and hopefully some down time.



Dr. Lisa Walker

One exciting announcement is the founding of the Dr. Tom Forrest Study Abroad Scholarship. This fund, once large enough, will each year provide financial support to a sociology or anthropology student attending a UNC Charlotte study abroad program.

Dr. Tom Forrest was a faculty member in Sociology for more than 30 years before his death in 2004. He served the department, at various times, as interim chair, graduate director, and undergraduate coordinator. He was also one of the founders of the Women's Studies program at UNC Charlotte. Dr. Forrest

was truly interested in the success and experiences of his students. His research interests and publications were concerned with the areas of organizations and natural disaster research.

During the early 1980's, Dr. Forrest taught abroad at the University of Reading (England). He subsequently maintained professional and personal relationships throughout England. Dr. Forrest took his nieces on trips abroad, and believed strongly in exposing young people to new cultures. We believe that honoring Dr. Forrest with a scholarship in his name to support students who study abroad is fitting and overdue.

Please see the last page of this newsletter for information on how you can contribute to the Dr. Tom Forrest Study Abroad Scholarship or other programs in the department.

Sociology Department

Website: [sociology.uncc.edu](http://sociology.uncc.edu)

Email: [sociology@uncc.edu](mailto:sociology@uncc.edu)

Phone: 704-687-7806

Fretwell 476

UNC Charlotte

9201 University City Blvd.

Charlotte, NC 28223



**UNC CHARLOTTE**  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

## Departmental Highlights

Spring 2013 Statistics	
Majors	467
Minors	232
Master's of Arts Students	21
Global Village Learning Community	22
Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty	16
Full-time Lecturers	4
Part-time Lecturers	8

## In the News

Faculty Spotlight	pg. 2
Buzz Around the Office	pg. 2
Graduate Students' Corner	pg. 3
Alpha Kappa Delta	pg. 3
About the Department	pg. 4
Support the Department	pg. 4

## Faculty Spotlight: Scott Fitzgerald—Director of Graduate Studies



Dr. Scott Fitzgerald

Dr. Scott Fitzgerald arrived at UNC Charlotte in 2003. During his time here, Scott has served as Coordinator for the first-year student Global Village Learning Community, Diversity Coordinator for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, & faculty advisor for the UNC at Charlotte Campus Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, and routinely taught a 5-week study abroad program in Manchester, UK. On June 1, Scott will transition into the Director of Graduate Studies for the Sociology Department, currently held by Dr. Stephanie Moller.

Building upon the prior leadership, Dr. Moller

helped expand the Masters of Arts program with an increase in recruitment, funding, and advocacy for top candidates. Under her leadership, the Masters of Arts program received high acclaim from external reviewers. Their report later highlighted the caliber of graduate students recruited into the program and placement of students into the top doctoral programs.

In the past three years, the program has had 18 graduates with seven out-of-state candidates. Continuing on the current success, Dr. Fitzgerald stated that he is excited about his new position and looks forward to the mentoring process of current and future students.



Dr. Stephanie Moller

## Buzz Around the Office: Visiting Scholar

Dr. Yang Cao, an Associate Professor, came to the Sociology Department in 2003, specializing in economic sociology, organizational sociology, stratification and mobility, quantitative methods, China studies, and post-socialist transition. In 2005, Dr. Cao was appointed an adjunct faculty position in the Organizational Science doctoral program.

For the 2013-2014 academic year, Dr. Cao has accepted a Visiting Scholar position at Zhejiang University in

China. There he will be conducting research on labor and employment issues in China, and also helping to build their sociology program. Currently Zhejiang University has almost 23,000 undergraduate and over 29,000 advanced and professional degree seekers.



Dr. Yang Cao

## Buzz Around the Office: NSF funded—Roots of STEM



Dr. Elizabeth Stearns

Over the past three years, Dr. Elizabeth Stearns has led a team as the principal investigator on a National Science Foundation (NSF) research grant focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) majors across the University of North Carolina system. Set up as a two-phased study, the research has helped illuminate the structural and individual factors that contribute to racial and gender gaps in success in STEM majors.

The first phase used the NC Roots dataset to link secondary school experiences of public school students with their educational outcomes in college. Now in the second phase, the team is collecting in-depth interviews of about 300 college seniors in the UNC system. The respondents include those who will successfully complete STEM majors; those who transferred out of STEM majors; and those whose academic profile fits that of successful STEM majors, but who chose to major in other fields.

Within the project, the team has presented and pub-

lished findings that include some of the following aspects of students' high school and college experiences that influenced higher rates of success in STEM using multi-level cross-classified models:

- Female students who attend high schools with more female math and science teachers are themselves significantly more likely both to declare STEM majors and to graduate with STEM majors.
- High school students who take Algebra 2 during or before their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year tend to declare and graduate STEM majors at significantly higher numbers. As well, students who take Algebra 2 in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades are less likely both to declare STEM majors and to graduate with STEM majors.
- Differences in grades earned during the first year of college do not account for the gender gap in patterns of major declaration.

Fellow researchers from UNC Charlotte include Dr. Roslyn Mickelson, Dr. Stephanie Moller, and Dr. Martha Botia. Dr. Melissa Dancy from the University of Colorado at Boulder is also a member of the research team.

## Graduate Students' Corner



Michael Walsh, graduating in May, has developed his research skills while working with Dr. Beth Rubin on his thesis and on consulting projects with Dr. Steven Rogelberg from the Organizational Science program. Michael was given the opportunity to conduct research on non-profit organizations while working with professionals in both the private and academic sectors. With this experience, Michael plans to take a year to continue to do research while he applies to the Organizational Science PhD. program.

Lauren Valentino, a Charlotte native, has accepted an offer to continue her studies in the doctoral program at Duke University for the upcoming Fall semester. While at UNC Charlotte, she has had the opportunity to work with multiple faculty members on a National Science Foundation grant project, Roots of STEM, as well as projects funded through the Institute of Education Sciences and the Poverty and Race Research Ac-



tion Council. With this experience, she is confident going into her PhD. She says: "the program at Charlotte has been a great launching pad for my academic career, and has provided me with a strong network of peers and friends."



Candace Miller will be graduating this May, and be returning to her home state as a doctoral student at the University of Virginia. Excited about her future, Candace stated that her time spent at UNC Charlotte has been an "invaluable experience that I couldn't imagine having from any other graduate program both in academic preparation and the friends made while in the Queen City."

Jessica Dilday is currently finishing her thesis and plans to apply to doctoral programs next year. In March, Jessica traveled to Austin, TX for the annual International Association for the Study of Popular Music conference. There, Jessica presented on queer music scenes and was also a guest DJ during a night event at the conference.



## Alpha Kappa Delta

Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) is the International Sociology Honor Society. Inductees are invited to the organization based on their demonstrated scholarship both in the major and in their overall course work. The purpose of the honor society is to promote excellence in scholarship in the study of sociology, research on social problems, and intellectual activities that will lead to improvement of the human condition. The first chapter of AKD was established in 1920 and the Eta Chapter of UNC Charlotte was established in 1974. On behalf of the department, we welcome the 2013 inductees.



### 2013 Alpha Kappa Delta Inductees

Brianna Abbate  
 Ummeh Ahmed  
 Jamillah Amin  
 Alexandra Bedell  
 Janice Boyd  
 Keith Broughton  
 Melissa Carter  
 Patrice Duff  
 Shalake Edwards  
 Kenzie Elmore  
 Jane Glodowski  
 Joseph Graham  
 Mitchell Hargett III  
 Nhoell Inthavong  
 Austin Jenkins  
 Cayla McCormick  
 Courtney Shanklin  
 Rebekah Ulmer

## About the Department & UNC Charlotte

The Department of Sociology in UNC Charlotte's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences has grown steadily since its beginnings. Currently, the program regularly supports more than 450 majors, over 230 minors, and 28 faculty members, offering classes in over 15 sub-disciplines including theory, race, methods, education, organizations/occupations/work, social psychology, criminology, & gender.

UNC Charlotte is one of a generation of universities founded in metropolitan areas of the United States immediately after World War II in response to rising education demands generated by the war and its technology.

The Charlotte Center opened Sept. 23, 1946, offering evening classes. After three years, the state closed the center, declaring that other on-campus facilities were sufficient to meet the needs of returning veterans & recent high school graduates.

Charlotte's education and business leaders moved to have the Charlotte Center taken over by the city school district and operated as Charlotte College starting in 1949.

In 1961, Charlotte College moved its growing student body into two new buildings on what was to become a 1,000-acre campus 10 miles from downtown Charlotte.

In 1965, the legislature approved bills creating the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the fourth campus of the statewide university system. In 1969, the university began offering programs leading to master's degrees. In 1992, it was authorized to offer programs leading to doctoral degrees.

Now a research intensive university, UNC Charlotte is the fourth largest of the 16 institutions within the University of North Carolina system and the largest institution in the Charlotte region.

The university comprises seven professional colleges & currently offers 20 doctoral programs, approximately 62 master's degree programs & approximately 90 bachelor's degrees. More than 900 full-time faculty comprise the university's academic departments & the 2012 fall enrollment exceeded 25,000 students. UNC Charlotte boasts more than 90,000 living alumni & adds 4,000 to 4,500 new alumni each year.

### Become a Supporter of the UNC Charlotte Sociology Program

The Sociology Department is growing & needs your help. Your gift will help us support our students in all stages of their education. All contributions are tax deductible. If you would like to help the Sociology Department at UNC Charlotte continue its program of excellence, please pay by check by printing, completing, & mailing this form along with a check. Make checks payable to the **UNC Charlotte Foundation**.

Please apply my check to:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Fund                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Research Fund                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Mike Pearson Scholarship Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Tom Forrest Study Abroad Scholarship Fund |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Sociology Department  
Fretwell 476  
UNC Charlotte  
9201 University City Blvd.  
Charlotte, NC 28223

You can also give online at <https://www.uncc.edu/giving/>. Make sure to designate your gift to Sociology. On the 2nd page under gift designation select "Other" and then type "Sociology General Fund", "Pearson Scholarship Fund," "Forrest Scholarship Fund," or "Sociology Graduate Research Fund" in the description box.

*Thank you for your contribution!*

