



SOCIAL CIRCLES



Volume 3, Issue 1

Spring 2012

In Spring 2012 we had:

- 457 Undergraduate Majors
- 219 Sociology Minors
- 29 students in the Masters Program
- 14 Students in the Global Village Learning Community
- 28 Faculty:
 - 15 Tenured and Tenure-track
 - 5 Full-time Lecturers
 - 1 Research
 - 7 Part-time Instructors

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Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the newest issue of Social Circles, the official newsletter of the Department of Sociology at UNC Charlotte. We have recently hosted two external reviewers – esteemed faculty members from other Universities – who will be helping the Department think about future directions and ways to improve what we are doing. Their visit was the culmination of a more-than-a-year-long process that involved a lot of data collection, report writing, meetings, and talking with students and faculty about the Department’s strengths and areas for improvement. We’d love to hear from you as well, if you have any ideas for our

future!

Meanwhile, we have been keeping up with all of our other activities as well! We have had a full slate of guest speakers again this year, and will conclude our Speaker Series with a visit from Dr. Glen Elder of UNC Chapel Hill on April 13th. His talk, which is co-sponsored by the Gerontology Program, will be at 10 a.m. Contact the Department for more details if you’d like to attend. As you can read below, our student groups continue to be active, and of course our faculty never stop teaching, researching, presenting, and helping to run the discipline and the University!

We’d love to connect our alumni to our current students. If



Dr. Lisa Walker you are an alum who would be interested in coming to talk to graduate or undergraduate students, please contact our undergraduate coordinator, Mary McKenzie, at mfmckenz@uncc.edu. If you have any questions about what is happening in the Department or how you can be involved, please contact me at Lisa.Walker@uncc.edu. Cheers,

Dr. Lisa Walker

Sociology Student Organizations’ Announcements



The Sociology Student Organizations are proud to continue their community volunteering efforts this spring with Adopt-A-Highway Campaign, Chick-Fil-A Sociology Spirit Night!, and a Cystic Fibrosis Walk as “Team Lefty.” For more information on how you can

support the team in their walk you can visit their donation page at www.cff.org/Great_Strides/TeamLefty.

The SSOs are also proud to sponsor Dr. Dallas Owens as a guest speaker for majors and minors. Dr. Owens is an Alumni of UNC Charlotte’s Department of Sociology, who has recently retired from public service with the U.S. Government.

Wrapping up the year, the SSOs will be hosting the annual Departmental Awards and Alpha Kappa Delta Na-

tional Honors Society inductions. For more information about the SSOs events, please contact Ashley Bland at arbland@uncc.edu.

AKD 2012 Inductees

- Bridgette Amick
- Jessica Deen
- Janet Fisher
- Amanda Harmon
- Jamilah Harris
- Jarreau Horton
- Zachary Kirchberg
- Jason McDonald
- Lacey McGowan
- Michelle Stanley
- Nicole Wallace

Graduate Student Spotlight



Lauren Valentino (top) and Candace Miller are planning on graduating next May with a summer filled with research for their thesis. When asked what brought them to the department both had similar responses noting the various specialties of the department.

Lauren stated that “the research on school desegregation and achievement gaps” was one of her main reasons for attending UNC Charlotte. When asked what advice she had, Candace responded that future students should “make a commitment to work hard from the start. Ask for help when you need it. It is expected and welcomed.”

Becky Schell (top center) has been living and working in Charlotte for the past six years after finishing her



undergrad career at Shippensburg University. Graduating next May, Becky plans on continuing to work at the Urban Institute as a research assistant as well as take some time to travel to Spain. Jessica Dilday graduated from UNC

Chapel Hill and is planning on graduating with her MA next May as well. Jessica turned to UNC Charlotte for “their known track record of PhD placement for their students.” This summer, Jessica plans to study for the GRE while investigating PhD programs, and enjoying her favorite past time, playing music.

Kevin Benson (top right) expects to graduate next May while he continues to work full time while pursuing his MA. Kevin graduated from Salem College and had first met

some of the faculty and students 5 years ago at a regional Conference. With a smile, his main piece of advice is to “begin your graduate work while you’re young. Don’t wait until you’re fifty years old, like me.” Michael Walsh, attended Mitchell Community college then finished his BA at UNC Charlotte. With a December graduation date, Michael hopes to pursue a summer internship while stressing future students to network!

Not photographed, graduating this May, Courtnee Bonds, plans on entering the work force along with Jennifer Frazier who is planning on teaching as an adjunct faculty member. Aaron will be attending Stanford University to pursue his Ph.D. in Sociology.



Student Spotlight: Anna Roldan



Currently in her senior year, sociology major Anna Roldan will participate in the 2012 Democratic National Convention Committee

Internship Program. Along with her major, Anna is pursuing two minors in Women and Gender Studies and American Studies.

Anna grew up in Massachusetts with her parents who were originally from Colombia, South America. From an early age, Anna has had a sociological eye stating that “I

am always proud to tell people of my Latino background because being multicultural is something I feel privileged about.” In combination with her diverse background and traveling to three other countries, Anna wanted to get involved in the political system stating that “as an American, I believe that it is important to know about your country and your role within it. This internship is a great professional exposure to real life issues of which I have learned a lot about throughout my sociology classes.”

During her studies, Anna has gained an awareness of her surroundings by understanding major

influences societies can have over the individual on both the micro and macro levels.

For example, Anna referenced her Gender Studies courses that taught her about “how socialization impacts children at an incredibly early age and how this later translates into their adult life.” By participating in the 2012 DNCC, Anna will gain first hand exposure to women and gender based policies. Upon completion of the internship, Anna plans on staying active in politics and returning to UNCC in the fall for a second degree. As a scholar and future leader, we wish Anna the best of luck.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Cynthia Hancock



Dr. Hancock is a Senior Lecturer and Member at large on the Board of Directors of Sigma Phi Omega, the National Gerontology

Honor Society. Dr. Hancock has earned her PhD. from UNC Chapel Hill, and first began her career at UNC Charlotte 11 years ago as a part-time lecturer within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. After four years, Dr. Hancock moved into her current role in the Gerontology Program. Now in her 7th year as the Undergraduate and Service Learning Coordinator for the Gerontology program, Dr. Hancock reflects over her time.

Dr. Hancock enrolled in her first class, *The Life Course*, with Dr. Glen Elder at UNC Chapel Hill as a graduate student. There she was introduced to Elder's research focused on the children of the great depression and later became one of his research assistants. Like many of us, Dr. Hancock stated, "at the time, I didn't appreciate this opportunity as much as I do now looking back on it."

With her experiences as a graduate student and now teaching, many factors drew Dr. Hancock to the Gerontology Program. "My main areas of interest have always been family, gender studies, and qualitative methodology," stated Dr. Hancock, and "given the opportunity to teach families and aging helped further develop my interests in aging and the life course." She now teaches

courses on families and aging, aging and the life course, sociology of aging, and a liberal studies film class that utilizes films focused on the stories of older adults.

Over the years, the Gerontology Program has seen growth and success in its student population. "Since I became the undergraduate coordinator the number of our minors has grown from thirty-something to nearly 100," said Dr. Hancock. Recently, she has approved 30 students to graduate this spring with the Gerontology Minor – "that is a record breaking number!" Along with the number graduating minors, Dr. Hancock has worked to establish the GRNT/SOCY 2100 course as a University approved service-learning course, and it is among the first to have that recognition at UNC Charlotte.

Looking over Dr. Hancock's vita, you will see presentations at multiple local, regional, and national conferences on gerontological pedagogy, including the program's service-learning model. She has published a book chapter and has a forthcoming article in *Gerontology and Geriatrics Education*. With her success and contributions to the subject area, Dr. Hancock stated that "by far my favorite experience is when former students pass me in the hall and spontaneously tell me that our service-learning opportunity in 2100 is the most life changing experience they have had while being an undergraduate student at UNC Charlotte." This is an ongoing occurrence reinforcing that "we are doing something wonderful not only for our students but for the older adults with whom they will work in the community. To me

success isn't seeing my 'name in lights' but in making a difference in the life of another human being."

On behalf of the Department, we thank Dr. Hancock for her hard work and invite anyone interested in learning more about the Gerontology Program to the following Spring Events.

Gerontology Spring Events Calendar

April 2nd @ 5:00 pm

"Careers in Aging"

@ **Madison Saints Paradise South Senior Living**

During this event we will recognize graduating gerontology students and induct those

who qualify into our Gamma Psi Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega (National Gerontology Honor Society)

April 13th @ 10:00 am

"Speaker Series"

@ **UNC Charlotte Fretwell 480 C**

The Gerontology Program is pleased to co-sponsor, with Sociology, the visit of Dr. Glen Elder from UNC Chapel Hill

Presentation titled:

"Studying Lives in Changing Times: A Life-Course Journey"

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT & UNC CHARLOTTE



The Department of Sociology at UNC Charlotte has grown steadily since its beginnings. Currently, the program regularly supports more than 450 majors, 219 minors, and 21 faculty members; offering classes in over 15 sub-disciplines including theory, race, methods, education, work, social psychology, criminology, and 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 on-campus facilities were sufficient to meet the needs of returning veterans and 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.

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.

Show Your Support!

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Become a Supporter of the UNC Charlotte Sociology Program

The Sociology Program is growing and needs your help. Your gift will help us support our students in all stages of their college career. 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, and mailing this form along with a check. Make checks payable to the **UNC Charlotte Foundation**.

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*Please return to: Sociology Department
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Thank you for your contribution!