

SOCIAL CIRCLES

Fall 2012

Welcome from the Chair

Greetings!

As I write this, the Sociology Department is currently in the process of interviewing candidates for two new assistant professors to start next Fall. While this is incredibly time-consuming now, we are excited by the prospects. We have had lots of very qualified applicants, and are confident we will make some terrific hires. Our Department has done well with student growth—as you can see below we consistently have over 450 majors these days—but the size of the faculty has not kept pace. Thankfully, we have a great group of faculty here already who have carried the load well, but it will be exciting to have two new folks to join our ranks next year.

As we wind down the Fall semester, we are looking ahead to the Spring and Summer. We are accepting applications for our summer



Dr. Lisa Walker

faculty-led program in Manchester, England. We are inviting students into our first-ever honors program in the major. We are participating in the campus's Communication across the Curriculum effort, and are planning a Writing/Speaking/Reading guide for students.

The Department's research successes have been numerous, with many published articles and books, as well as research grants, among the faculty recently. We underwent a self study and external review last year (an event that happens every 10-15 years) and received glowing reviews from the external examiners.

All in all, the Department is productive and active, and I, for one, am grateful to be here. Please let us know how being here has been good for you too.

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Departmental Highlights

Fall 2012 Stats	
Majors	456
Minors	267
MA Students	26
Global Village Learning Community	22
Tenured and Tenure-Track	16
Full-time Lecturers	4
Part-time Lecturers	8

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UNC CHARLOTTE
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Faculty Spotlight: Lori Farney



Lori Farney is a new lecturer specializing in life course and aging. Lori was born and raised in New Bedford, MA. She first attended Boston University, and then took “a few years off.” Several years later, she finished her bachelor’s degree in psychology (with a minor in aging studies) and received a master’s degree in sociology from Middle Tennessee State University. Her

undergraduate and graduate research has involved older women in prison, and she has conducted research in seven women’s prisons in the American South. After viewing the plight of several older women who were incarcerated for killing abusive spouses, she was motivated to attend law school.

One semester of law school, however, was enough to remind Lori that she is “meant to be a social scientist.” Returning to sociology, Lori received a fellowship to pursue her Ph D at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville—where she completed her course work. She is delighted to be teaching at UNC Charlotte, while she continues her research and writing. She is excited about the new opportunity to conduct research in Mecklenburg County jails.

Previously, Lori has taught sociology and gerontology at UT, Knoxville and Middle Tennessee State University. Her publications are diverse—spanning the topics of older incarcerated women, ageism in the workplace, and benefits of senior centers.

Lori has lived and worked in New York City, Los Angeles, and Nashville, TN in careers including retail management, real estate, and music. She spends her free time “exploring Charlotte’s diversity” and “breaking age norms.” She says, “Charlotte is a great place to be a sociologist!”

Faculty Spotlight: Kendra Jason



Kendra Jason is a new lecturer and academic advisor in the Department of Sociology. She teaches Introduction to Sociology and American Minority Groups.

Kendra received her Bachelor of Science from her hometown college, Augusta State University (Georgia). Her Master of Science was earned at North Carolina State University with her thesis, “Organizational Inequality

in Job Promotions.” Currently, she is ABD (all but dissertation) and working on a qualitative dissertation project which examines supervisors’ influences on low-wage workers’ mobility prospects in the healthcare sector.

Kendra has taught at NC State, North Carolina Central University, Wake Technical Community College, and the University of Phoenix. Most recently, Kendra worked at the UNC Institute on Aging located in Chapel Hill, NC where her research focused on workforce development for low-wage workers by analyzing factors affecting quality of care, patient satisfaction, and better patient outcomes through skill development.

Other areas of Kendra’s research interest include critical pedagogy, minority group mentorship in academic institutions, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. She has publications in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, *Healthcare Management Review*, and *Teaching Sociology*.

Kendra has been awarded the North Carolina State University’s Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award and a teaching fellowship using an inquiry-guided learning approach. She holds memberships and serves on regional and national professional committees, more recently serving as Chair of the Labor Studies Division in the Society for the Study of Social Problems Division.

Kendra enjoys movies, going to the gym, and discovering cool things to do in Charlotte with her 3-year-old daughter, Kennedy.



2012 UNCC Explore

Buzz Around the Office: New Beginnings in Public Policy



Dr. Beth A. Rubin,
Director of Public Policy,
Professor of Sociology

Coming off her most recent appointment as President of the Southern Sociological Association, Dr. Beth A. Rubin became the third appointed Director of Public Policy on July 1, 2012. Public Policy is an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program that “offers a strong core curriculum emphasizing research design, varieties of analytic techniques, economic analysis, evaluation research, policy ethics, and an overall focus on policy development and implementation.” Her mission for Public Policy is “to continue building on the hard work and success of (former Public Policy Director) Dr. David Swindell’s leadership and take Public Policy to the next level.” In this new leadership role, Beth Rubin says she is “excited by the opportunity to work with a large, diverse, and accomplished faculty, and incredibly

talented students to increase the visibility and impact of Public Policy scholarship and research.”

More about Public Policy:

Ph.D. Graduates of Public Policy at UNC Charlotte advance in careers that contribute to society through the application of their training and the continuation of their scholarship. They are positioned to shape and inform policy in the local region and beyond. Career options include policy analysis, program evaluation, policy development, decision making and academic positions in the public, private and nonprofit sectors at the local, regional, state, national and international levels. For more information about Public Policy, please visit publicpolicy.uncc.edu.

Graduate Student’s Corner: Experience with Presenting

Graduate Student Lauren Valentino began the fall semester presenting at the American Sociological Association annual conference in Denver, CO. On August 20, Valentino gave her presentation [*Internships and the Liberal Arts: Resisting the Vocational, Creating Dilettantes*] in front of peers, researchers, and reporters. A writer for *Inside Higher Ed* covered Valentino’s presentation, providing an opportunity for more people to experience her presentation through this expanded platform. Reflecting on the week, Valentino stated that “I had a really great opportunity to

present my research at ASA, and it was so helpful to get feedback on my study and to meet other researchers who are involved in similar areas. I think it’s really important to be able to explain your findings to a wider audience that extends beyond those who attend academic conferences, so I was excited to see my research getting this kind of publicity.” For more information on this article please visit sociology.uncc.edu. More information about the annual ASA meeting can be found at www.asanet.org.



Lauren Valentino,
MA Candidate 13’

Sociology Student Organization and Alpha Kappa Delta



The Sociology Student Organizations have hit the ground running this semester. They started off participating in the “Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure” at Marshall Park raising over \$100 for the cause with a team comprising 15 students and friends.

The SSOs are gathering volunteers together for Adopt A Highway. Family, friends, and anyone available are welcome to attend. This is a way to give back to the community by cleaning up the University City area. Adopt A Highway is a monthly event held on the third Saturday of every month at 9:00 AM. Interest-

ed alumni and others may join the student organizers at the intersection of Old Concord Road and Newell Baptist Church Road.

Wear your department pride on your sleeve! The Sociology Student Organizations have a limited supply of T-shirts for sale. The theme this year is “49er Spirit,” with gold and green designs. You may purchase a t-shirt from Mary McKenzie for \$10.

Alpha Kappa Delta members have spent the semester providing service to their fellow classmates. Through the Peer Tutoring Program, students are able to access free tutoring in SOCY 1101, 3153, 4155, and 4173. They have also piloted a Peer Mentoring Program. Here, students get advice from fellow students on courses and academic plans of study. For more information, please contact Jessica Deen (jhdeen@uncc.edu) or sociologyclub@uncc.edu.

