Sociology Department News

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Department Welcomes New Chair

Dr. John Toth joined the Department of Sociology in July of 2008 as an Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair. After a three-year tour in the U.S. Army, he graduated summa cum laude in 1991 from Youngstown State University with a double major in German and Sociology. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology in 1998 from Mississippi State University. Prior to joining UCA he was the Chair of the Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Hendrix College.

Internship In Washington, D.C.

Sociology major, Shannon Cleveland, has returned from Washington, D.C. where she completed an internship at a non-profit advocacy group this past summer. Ms. Cleveland received a $6,000 scholarship from The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars to fund her internship and class. Once a week, she attended Essentials for Aspiring Leaders: A Washington, DC Perspective.

Ms. Cleveland interned at the Amputee Coalition of America and on her second week with the ACA she participated in a lobby day on Capitol Hill where the coalition spoke to a number of Congressmen’s legislative aids asking support for a bill on prosthetic parity. This bill would require insurance companies to insure amputee’s prosthesis and services on par with Medi-

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Ms. Cleveland lobbied in Senate offices including those of Mark Pryor and Elizabeth Dole. She also attended the press conference on the Americans with Disabilities Act amendment where she met Representative Jim Langevin from Rhode Island who is the only congressman in a wheelchair. She received tickets from the House majority leader’s office to attend the vote on that bill on the Representatives floor in the Capitol.

Ms. Cleveland’s adventures in Washington, D.C. included sightseeing at the National Zoo, the Natural History Museum, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, and visits to the major monuments. She attended the Fourth of July fireworks underneath the Washington Monument. She was able to take side trips to both Atlantic City, New Jersey where she saw the ocean and Baltimore Maryland where she toured the civil war ship the U.S.S. Constellation.

When asked about her summer, Cleveland stated, “My experience in Washington, DC has truly changed the way I view myself and my future. I feel more confident in myself and I’m looking forward to the success that I see me achieving.”

Outstanding Students Named

Jeremy Disotell was selected by the faculty of the Department of Sociology as the Katherine Hinson Outstanding Sociology Student Award recipient for Spring 2008. While attending school full-time, Jeremy served as an officer with the Conway Police Department. Jeremy’s sociology honors thesis was entitled “The Relationship of Social Factors and the Change in Crime in Arkansas from 2000 to 2005.” He is currently attending law school at U of A-Fayetteville.

Melissa McChesney, senior sociology major, was selected by the faculty of the Department of Sociology as the Katherine Hinson Outstanding Sociology Student Award recipient for Fall 2008. Melissa is currently finishing her Honors Thesis on academic persistence of UCA freshmen. She plans to take a year off and then enter graduate school in the Fall of 2010.

Scholarship Recipient

Veronica D. Amos, senior sociology minor, is a recipient of a Fall 2008 UCA Women’s Book Scholarship for non-traditional female students. Ms. Amos received $250.00 in funds from UCA University Women (a non-profit organization) to help purchase her books. Ms. Amos was the author of one of three winning essays.

After graduation, Ms. Amos plans to continue working as a mental-health technician counseling children with severe behavioral problems - a career that applies skills from both her Psychology major and Sociology minor.
International AIDS Conference

Dr. S. Lynne Rich was invited and attended the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August. AIDS 2008 is convened by the International AIDS Society (IAS), the world’s leading independent association of HIV professionals. Central to the conference is the transfer of knowledge and sharing of best practices. Those in attendance included such dignitaries as former President Bill Clinton, the President of Mexico Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, and the Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-Moon. As a delegate for the United States, Dr. Rich and colleague Dr. Robertson, presented their research, funded by an N.I.D.A. grant (R01DA17509), on the influence of family and partner on unprotected sex among 170 adolescent girls with a history of incarceration. Their analyses revealed, for example, that although family support is a protective factor for adolescent females, the influence of male partners and alcohol use has a greater impact on condom use. Their hope is that the findings may one day be integrated into the design of HIV prevention programs for this adolescent population.

Paper Published

"Impacts of Global Economy and Women’s Employment in the Informal Economy on Family Violence" by Dr. Rifat Akhter, Assistant Professor of Sociology, has been accepted for publication in the fall 2008 edition of The Global Studies Journal. Global Studies Journal is devoted to mapping and interpreting new trends and patterns in globalization. Published on a quarterly basis, this journal attempts to do this from many points of view, from many locations in the world, and in a wide-angle kaleidoscopic fashion.

A New Baby

Be sure to congratulate Mr. Wade Poe. He welcomed Elijah, his third child, and second son in July. Elijah weighed 2 pounds 3 ounces. Update: 30 December

Elijah is growing quickly. He currently weighs 12 1/2 pounds and is sitting up. Mr. Poe is now sleeping through the night.
Dr. Brian Campbell took a group of students to Belize and Honduras for three weeks in May. The group explored the country of Honduras, passed through Guatemala by bus, and traveled throughout Belize. They visited an agricultural festival, anthropological and historical sites, ecological parks, government offices, nongovernmental organization headquarters, museums, national parks, and many other sites. They learned about the ecology and cultures of the region with local experts, while engaging in exploratory hikes, canoe trips and spelunking expeditions.

Dr. Campbell stated, “We learned very much about ourselves, our relationship to the environment, and the interconnections between conspicuous consumption in developed countries and social and ecological degradation in the developing world.”

(CAAH!) Conserving Arkansas’s Agricultural Heritage

“One for the cut worm, one for the crow, one to rot, and one to grow”

http://arkansasagro.wordpress.com/

The Inaugural CAAH! Seed Swap on March 1, 2008 at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, AR was a great success. We estimate that approximately one hundred people attended, and upwards of three or four hundred varieties were exchanged. Many people from different walks of life and different age groups got acquainted, exchanged seeds, and shared stories about their gardening experiences, family farming history, and of course, their varieties of seeds.

Sociology Club Names Officers

The Sociology Club recently met to set the club’s agenda for the year and to choose its officers for the 2008-2009 school year. Those elected are President, Casey Padgett, Vice-President, Holly Kirby, Treasurer Rachael Wright, and Kristyn Osborne, Secretary. All officers are senior sociology majors.
“Eating Locally: The 100 Mile Diet”

Dr. Brian Campbell, anthropology professor at UCA, is organizing projects for the fall to engage students and the public in an awareness of the carbon footprint burden of transporting food thousands of miles versus eating locally grown food as well as the extinction of innumerable varieties of local and foreign cultivars during the 20th Century. Called the “100 Mile Diet,” the project will give students a concrete way of acting upon what they have learned about the troubling loss of genetic diversity in agriculture world-wide by participating in goal-setting activities and reaching out to other clubs and members of the UCA student body to recruit volunteers. They will combine research and public service by cultivating endangered seeds; developing websites and databases; working with non-profit organizations to promote a “basket-a-month” program; and participating in anthropology club fundraising activities (including a competition and sale of dried gourd birdhouses). Last but not least, they will plan and implement a hands-on exhibition for children and families at the Natural State Expo to be held in Little Rock on October 17, 2008. Preliminary ideas for the public exhibition include a “taste-test” of locally-grown food and a visual and participatory way for children and their parents to see the cost of food in terms of dollars and cents and energy consumption to produce and transport the goods. If you would like to get course credit for working on the Natural State Expo 100 Mile Diet exhibition, sign up for Dr. Alison Hall’s Museum Anthropology course.

Student Receives SURF Grant

Sydney Yeager of Smackover, a senior at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, has been awarded a Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. The grant is for the sum of $2650.00 and UCA will match $1250.00 in funds.

Yeager’s in-depth research project **Which Doctor is the Witch Doctor?** is a comparative ethnomedical analysis of Western scientific medicine and traditional Ozark healing practices. Dr. Brian Campbell of the UCA Sociology Department will serve as faculty mentor for the research.

Yeager also worked on an archaeological dig excavating a Hellenistic Pirate Cove on the Western side of Crete.

Yeager is pursuing Bachelor of Science degrees in Sociology and History along with a double minor in Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies, UCA Honors College. She is the daughter of Jim and Crystal Yeager of Smackover.
The degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, with a major in sociology, requires the completion of 124 hours, including the general education component, degree requirements, major requirements listed below, a minor worked out with a minor advisor, 40 upper division hours, and a minimum 2.0 GPA overall, in the major, and in the minor. Students may declare a major in sociology after they have completed SOC 1300 with a grade of C or better.

Grants Awarded

"Conserving Arkansas's Agricultural Heritage" The CAAH! project developed by Dr. Brian Campbell and directed collaboratively with Dr. Alison Hall has been awarded a $2000 grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council to continue to document traditional varieties of crops in the Ozark region of the state of Arkansas. The research seeks to document the historical, cultural, culinary, and agroecological characteristics of the varieties and house this information in a database and interactive website. In addition, the seed varieties will be propagated in campus, community, and local farmer-gardener plots, harvested and saved in a campus seed bank (housed in the World Cultures and Humanities Institute in the College of Liberal Arts, and distributed to the public at a Seed Swap.

The project is further bolstered by a $2632 grant from the University Research Council that will allow Dr. Campbell to pursue more theoretical interests regarding the applied project that documents, propagates, saves, and distributes rare crop varieties. The specific question explored in this research is what procedures are taken, if any, to prevent cross-pollination among open-pollinated varieties that traditional Ozark seed-savers grow. The grant also allows for continued on-site analysis, propagation, and dis-