

Sociology Matters

Volume 6

Fall 2015

Issue 1

Department of Sociology

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Welcome from the Chair

Greetings to all!

As many of you are aware by now, I am the new Chair of the Department of Sociology. I began teaching at Radford University in 2007 so I am a familiar face to many of you; and you can still find me tucked away in my corner office, Russell 206. The department is bustling - with everything from students presenting at conferences to

guest speakers coming to campus - and a little bit of everything else in between. Stay tuned for updates on special events, as the Department of Sociology and the Sociology Club have a lot planned for us all this year. Enjoy the fall weather, and have a great academic year!

- *Dr. Beth Lyman*

Spring Graduation 2015



RESEARCH, TEACHING, CONSULTING

This Fall semester, the Department of Sociology's Center for Social and Cultural Research (CSCR) has a staff of six students: Research Associate **Deryk Jackson**; Research Assistants **Bianca Dickerson**, **Blake Sholes**, **Kelsey Boyd**, and **Amen Yemane**; and CSCR Intern **Lauren Bailey**. The CSCR is running at full capacity with a wide variety of research, class, consulting, and community-based projects currently underway by our Faculty Associates. If you are interested in working at the CSCR as a work study student or intern, please contact **Dr. Mary LaLone** at mlalone@radford.edu.

Sociology Students Present Solutions

Montgomery, Alabama



Judith Little Problem Solving Competition at the annual meeting of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology. Client: Montgomery Area Council on Aging

Four sociology majors and minors traveled to Montgomery, Alabama in October to compete in the Judith Little Problem Solving Competition, an event held at the annual meeting of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS). Team members **Nijeria Jones**, **Sierra Alexander**, **Bianca Dickerson**, and **Deryk Jackson** met the director of a local non-profit agency serving elderly individuals in the Montgomery area, were given a real problem faced by the organization, and then had 48 hours to develop a solution using sociological theory and original research. All teams presented their solutions to the agency director and a panel of judges from the AACS. The question that teams worked on was: How can the Montgomery Area Council on Aging (MACOA) increase the number of volunteers under the age of 50 for their Meals on Wheels program? Team RU had a multifaceted approach that included working with the colleges and universities in the area to get student volunteers and interns, increasing visibility in the neighborhoods to draw in new volunteers, and engaging area police to create a sense of community that will encourage volunteers to visit clients in higher crime areas. The team did not win, but the agency director will be incorporating their ideas into MACOA's operations. The students and their faculty advisor, **Dr. Lyman**, were supported in full by the Scholar Citizen Initiative, the Office for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, and the Department of Sociology.

Chris Saraceni: Alumni Mentor of the Year



Chris Saraceni became the inaugural winner of the Alumni Mentor of the Year at the Voices of Experience Event held October 15. This award was presented by faculty and the Sociology Alumni Mentoring Network (SAMN).

Mr. Saraceni graduated in 2010 with a degree in Sociology. Currently, he is the Program Coordinator for the Afterschool Enrichment Program (ACE) at Pulaski County High School, through Beans & Rice, Inc.

He has developed strong ties with our community by providing academic and practical support for underserved public school students. He is dedicated to the Department of Sociology and provides many budding sociologists with applied experience. Mr. Saraceni regularly visits classes, speaks at special events, mentors sociology students, and supervises internships. He is one of the founding members of SAMN. Chris Saraceni is an invaluable resource!



Chris Saraceni

Engaging the Community

Newbern, Virginia

Students in Dr. Mary LaLone's Fall 2015 SC-SOCY 486 class are learning and practicing Community-Based Research (CBR) principles and methods as they work collaboratively with the Wilderness Road Regional Museum (WRRM) in Newbern, VA.

The RU-WRRM partnership was formed in 2012 by **Dr. LaLone** and **Dr. Carolyn Mathews**, President of the New River Historical Society and RU professor, to provide opportunities for RU students to engage in service-learning and apply CBR skills as they assist in museum development activities. In Spring 2013, the Sociology Department and Scholar-Citizen Initiative jointly sponsored the first SC-SOCY 486 "Engaging the Community" class. Students in that first class worked collaboratively with the museum to develop a four-phase development plan and prepare a consulting report with initial ideas for funding opportunities, educational programs, archival preservation, and media, promotion and advertising. Many of the ideas were developed further through RU internships and independent study projects over the next two years.



Now, three years later, students in the Fall 2015 SC-SOCY "Engaging the Community" class are involved in the next stage of the partnership. In CBR style, the community partner identified a topic of concern that it asked the RU class to address as a CBR consulting team. This year's topic is "Involving the Community in the Museum." The class goal is to help the museum identify its community constituents, and to develop museum outreach tools and ideas that the museum might use to enhance its interaction with the community. Eight students form the class research team – **Lauren Bailey, Bianca Billings, Catherine Costello, Victoria Curtis, Stephanie Prusa, Allanah Rocha, Blake, Sholes, and Rolphine Vales** – with Drs. LaLone and Mathews serving as the co-directors, and RU alumna **Kasey Campbell** (who now works for the WRRM) serving as a museum facilitator.

After learning CBR principles in the classroom setting, the team set to work to apply their training during an all-day collaborative brainstorming session with museum volunteers and historical society members. Over the next weeks they conducted investigative research on museum "best practices" for community outreach, and developed a survey for the museum to use to gain community input from festival participants during this year's Newbern Fall Festival. They are working to define the museum's community, create educational events, broaden the museum's reach through various media outlets, expand volunteer programs, identify fundraising and grant opportunities, and develop recommendations for museum interpretation of African-American experiences. Their results and recommendations will be written as a formal consulting report, which they will deliver to the museum on December 14, 2015 during a presentation on their work for the New River Historical Society's Board of Directors and museum volunteers. The class recently gave a presentation on its community-based work for the RU Scholar-Citizen Symposium on October 23, 2015.

Voices of Experience

Senior Seminar

Each year, the Department of Sociology hosts speaker panels providing students with a wealth of knowledge and experience shared by our alumni. On October 15, the panels were merged into a day-long networking event – Voices of Experience 2015.

The day included formal speaker panels, as well as informal networking opportunities.

The first panel, Grad School: From Application to Graduation, included speakers from a range of backgrounds. **Isabel Wu** (current graduate student at Appalachian State, and RU Sociology alumna), **Dr. Laura Jacobsen** (Associate Dean of the Graduate College at RU), and **Lori Hall** (current graduate student at Virginia Tech, and RU Sociology adjunct faculty member) all came together to offer information and advice to current students.

This panel was followed by an informal lunch in the Muse dining hall, where alumni, faculty, and students could share stories and a meal.

The evening was topped off with a hearty meal in an informal atmosphere, allowing students, faculty, and alumni to become acquainted and share ideas. Throughout the day, our wonderful alumni shared their own experiences to help provide guidance for current students preparing to enter their professional careers and education.

All of the participating alumni are members of the newly formed Sociology Alumni Mentoring Network (SAMN). In this group, alumni and current students are provided with opportunities to interact and form network ties. Students and alumni interested in participating in these types of activities should contact **Dr. Amy Sorensen** acressell@radford.edu.

The event was made possible by support from: The Department of Sociology, the Sociology Club, the Scholar-Citizen Initiative, The Center for Social and Cultural Research, and Alumni Relations.



Alicia Ring



Matthew Reed



Mary Dickerson



Isabel Wu



Rick Sparks

Alumni Career Panel



The Alumni Career Panel offered timely career advice and was very well received. On the panel were Radford University Sociology alumni:

- **Rick Sparks** (Class of 1999) –serving as University Registrar at Virginia Tech
- **James Dye** (Class of 2007) –working as a data analyst/report writer for Human Resources at Virginia Commonwealth University
- **Alicia Ring** (Class of 2009) –currently a Student Support Services counselor at Wytheville Community College
- **Chris Saraceni** (Class of 2010) –the Program Coordinator for Beans & Rice
- **Matthew Reed** (Class of 2012) – working with Intercept Youth Services, Roanoke
- **Jessica Chandler** (Class of 2012) –working with Valley Community Services Board
- **Mary Dickerson** (Class of 2013) –a 6th grade math and history teacher at Check Elementary School in Floyd County
- **Shylah Jones** (Class of 2013) –working as a Truancy Case Manager at New River Valley Community Services

Community Foundation of the NRV

Livability in Action Newsletter - Dr. Melinda Wagner

ROOTS WITH WINGS is an Oral History project and partnership between Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, Floyd County High School, and Radford University. The Project plants the roots of intergenerational community relationships, while introducing state-of-the-art technology wings. These partners spend every spring semester working with Floyd County High School students and their teacher to instruct how to conduct ethical, methodologically sound interviews, record using audio and video equipment, transcribe, archive, discover themes, and create movies. In 2015, 42 participants from 4 generations learned from World War II veterans and their families, while 73 community members followed the weekly activities via the blog: www.floydstorycenter.blogspot.com. To learn more and support the effort, contact: floydstorycenter@gmail.com

The Floyd Press reports on Roots with Wings



Picture are: (from left) guests of honor Mary Lou Kelley, Al Kelley (pink shirt), Marvin Nolen, McCroy Shortt, and Joyce Shortt. (Maurice Slusher was unable to attend)

Veteran films shown

The Floyd County High School's Digital Video and Media class in the "Roots with Wings," Floyd Story Center oral history project, completed the semester with a showing of eight short student films. The movies premiered in an inappropriately theater set up in the Vocational Studies building. Mr. Al Kelly, Mr. Marvin Nolen, Mr. McCroy Shortt and Mr. Maurice Slusher were featured. Each WWII veteran had detailed stories to relate and wartime photographs to share, which added to a rich mix of resources to use in producing the films.

Now in its eighth year, the Floyd Story Center oral history program partners Old Church Gallery staff, a high school teacher, and a Radford University professor and mentors, to teach oral history collection skills to Floyd County High School students through interviews with WWII veterans. Students hear

Floyd County prior to the Second World War, a time and a place much different from today, and record the veterans' experiences of leaving the county for the first time to serve overseas. Each interviewee's story is transcribed in full, personal photographs are digitized and saved, and after creating storyboards from part of the recorded interview, the students produce short films using iMovie. Project teaching materials and equipment used by the classes include a 100 page "how to" project manual, a lesson workbook, recording and filming equipment, and editing software and laptops.

The "Roots with Wings" project now holds 30 recordings and transcripts, and 48 short films at the Old Church Gallery.

Angela Myers talks about the project.

One of the movies told the story of the Floyd Blue Sox. Maurice Slusher at bat.

Funding from Radford University, The Larry Woodrow Vest Fund, and the Community Foundation of the New River Valley have helped to support the archives.

Preserve Rural Heritage and Community Character



Goals

6. Encourage Development that Preserves Rural Character
7. Protect Natural Landscapes and Ecosystems
8. Recognize & Strengthen Natural, Cultural and Historic Assets
9. Support Arts Culture and Community Character

Sociologist Ann Mullen, University of Toronto

October 22

Bondurant Auditorium: Distinguished sociologist Dr. Ann Mullen's lecture, "Degrees of Inequality" addressed inequality in America's colleges and universities. Deryk Jackson, president of **The Sociology Club** was instrumental in planning the successful event. The Center for Social and Cultural Research (CSCR) was among the co-sponsors of Mullen's visit to campus. After her presentation, Dr. Mullen met with students and faculty from the Department.



Faculty News and Notes

Research, Teaching, Service

Dr. Allison Wisecup is currently finishing two projects. One research paper focuses on students' attitudes about research methods courses. In this paper, she outlines the contours of students' attitudes and future occupational aspirations using survey data collected from sociology majors in departments from 5 states. Another project, with Dean Dennis Grady and Rick Roth, Chair of Geospatial Sciences, focuses on Sustainability at Radford University. Over the course of three years, the research team collected electricity use data from the Governor's Quad dorms on Radford's campus. The team examined the relative impact of intervention strategies for reducing electricity use.

This year students in **Dr. Wisecup's** research methods classes will be working with Abby Mundy, the director of Student Health Services, to collect and analyze data regarding student utilization of Student Health Services at Radford University. She is also working with Blake Sholes to examine students' attitudes about sustainability.

Drs. Carla Corroto, Beth Lyman, and Allison Wisecup presented the Workshop, "Partnering within the University: The Project of Public Sociology," at the annual meeting of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS) in Montgomery, Alabama. Their workshop offered solutions to institutional issues around civic engagement. While applied work is constitutive of a sociological perspective, across diverse curricula applications can offer challenges to a university's mission, individual instructor's course learning objectives, and to student expectations.

Dr. Carla Corroto presented her research paper, "The Architecture of Humor as a Public Sociology" in Chicago at The Society for Symbolic Interaction in August; and presented, "The Architecture of Resistance: Offering a Sociological Perspective to an Antagonistic Audience," at AACS in Montgomery. Along with coauthor, Lucinda Kaukas Havenhand, Dr. Corroto published "Collaborative Autoethnography: The Design and Architecture of Disability Studies," in *Disability and Qualitative Inquiry: Methods for Rethinking an Ableist World* edited by Ronald Berger and Laura Lorenz.

Club News

Activities



- Panel - Trans Identity: Are We Born Who We Are, October 26 was Moderated by **Dr. Joanna Hunter** and panelists included **Bianca Dickerson, Deryk Jackson, Hannah Knowles, Shawn Ficadenti, and Chyna Matheny**
- Panel on Police Brutality is in the planning stages. The date to be determined. Stay tuned!

Sociology Club

•••
New members are always welcome. Please join the Sociology Club!

Club twitter page:
<https://twitter.com/RUsocyclub>

•••
President:
Deryk Jackson

Vice President:
Hannah Knowles

Secretary:
Crystal Allen

Treasurer:
Ashlee Peatross

Historian:
Tyler Rosenblatt

