

Sociology & Criminal Justice Department Newsletter

Old Dominion University

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November 2004

Chair's Letter, Brian K. Payne, Ph.D.

One of my favorite stories that relates to education is the story of how caterpillars become butterflies. It is analogous to the way that many of us change in our lives. Trained as a social scientist, I am sure that I am butchering the process somewhat. But, I'll give it a shot anyway.

Metamorphosis refers to a change in shape or form. Just as all your faculty changed during their collegiate years, you too will change during these important years. Caterpillars go into their cocoons as part of their metamorphosis process, and you and I went to college as part of our metamorphosis.

Apparently during the late stages of the caterpillar's metamorphosis, caterpillars will use their legs to break through their cocoons. Their legs eventually become stronger and turn into wings. If someone breaks the cocoon for the caterpillar, its wings will never form and it will die. They must work hard to change into butterflies.

You probably see where I am going with this. You went into our "college cocoon" in one form and you will leave in another form. If your professors make your coursework too easy, you will get nothing out of it. In effect, we don't want to break your cocoon for you, we want to make you work to break it on your own.

In challenging you to think critically, develop your communication skills, and enhance your passion for knowledge, it is my belief that your metamorphosis will be worthwhile for you.

I speak of this metamorphosis as if it is a one-way street, but it is not. While you are changing--and I'd like to believe that our faculty are having a role in that change--we, the faculty, are also changing. As faculty, what's most exciting about our changes is the role that our past and current students have had on our metamorphosis.

Put simply, we are different because you have simultaneously challenged us and reminded us of our own scholarly passions. In the introductory courses, you bring a sense of excitement that takes us back to our own introductions to our fields. In the upper level courses, you question and re-question what you have learned and what we have told you in a way that causes us to renew our interests in the topics that have driven our scholarly endeavors.

In doing this, you have not broken our cocoon, but you have made us work to learn in the same way that we have made you work.

The only difference is that we get paid for it. Not a bad gig if you can get it.

As you read this newsletter, you will see change that has been occurring over the past several months and will continue to occur. You need to know that you are partly responsible for this change. Please stay involved and experience the change firsthand!

Faculty Activities

Let's Go to London

Victoria Time is developing a study abroad program in which students can earn credit for a trip to London next May. Trips to various sites including Scotland Yard, Old Bailey (the Central Criminal Court), the Tower of London, and prison and remand centers are on the itinerary. Lectures by scholars and professionals from England are being planned. It sounds too good to be true, but you can actually get three credits of upper level criminal justice or sociology credit for participating. For more information, contact Dr. Time at vtime@odu.edu.

Faculty Member Nominated as Rising Star

James C. Oleson was nominated for the rising star award presented by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia. Oleson was nominated based on his excellence in teaching and his growing research agenda. Dozens of former and current students, colleagues, and peers offered letters of support on his behalf.

Faculty Participate in International Conference

Karen Polonko and **Lou Lombardo** presented "Enlightened Witnessing: Rehumanizing through Confrontation with Violence" at the annual meetings of the International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities in Prato, Italy, this past summer.

Funded Research Continues

Xiushi Yang received a \$225,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue his work on exploring the relationship between HIV and migration.

Randy Gainey and **Brian Payne** completed their project examining the distribution of elder abuse cases across neighborhoods. The project was funded by the Alzheimer's and Related Research Award Fund. Along with **Dianne Carmody**, Payne and Gainey also completed a project titled, "The Response to Sexual Assault in the Commonwealth," and funded by the Virginia Department of Health.

Sociology and Criminal Justice Lecture Series off to a Blazing (and Funny) Start

This semester marked the department's inaugural Sociology and Criminal Justice Lecture Series. **Lee Bouvier**, the department's last comic sociologist standing, presented his comedy routine to kick off the Sociology and Criminal Justice Lecture Series in September. About seventy students and faculty members attended the event. Let's hope he keeps his day job!

On October 5th, **Randy Gainey** presented "Violence over the Life Course." Approximately seventy students who attended the event were provided with an objective and well-detailed overview of the way that violence changes during our lives.

Student Activities

Sociology and Criminal Justice Research Day Broadens Horizons of Participants

About seventy students and faculty members attended the Sociology and Criminal Justice Research Day in the Newport News Room in the Webb Center, April 24th. The event featured eleven poster sessions that described research conducted by Sociology and Criminal Justice students over the Spring semester.

Which neighborhoods are safest? Who drinks the most on campus? What do students think about drugs? How are homeless people perceived? These are just a few of the questions students addressed in their Capstone research projects.

One group of students--**Adjoa Attah, Ashley Banks, Krista Dupont, Elizabeth Edge, and Derek Shoemaker**—presented a study in which they examined how Old Dominion University impacts safety perceptions in five planning districts surrounding the university. The students included an interactive display and a copy of their finding in their presentation.

According to the authors, "As a planning district's proximity to the university increases, a more dramatic and positive relationship between Old Dominion University and safety perceptions was observed."

Such a finding implies that ODU's presence makes members of surrounding neighborhoods feel safer.

This was the fourth research day hosted by the department.

Students conducted their research in groups, which were supervised by faculty members. "This gives students the opportunity to learn about group work and about research," said **Garland White**, associate professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice. White has been supervising these projects for several years. He supervised eight of the research projects featured at Research Day.

A recent survey of students taking the capstone research course found that students reported many benefits from working in groups. Here are a few of their comments:

- I liked getting to know different people. I was nervous about giving my ideas at first, but my group members liked them.
- We all learned about discussing differences and resolving them maturely.
- I like that I was able to call and ask for help when I needed it and I could ask others' opinions on my work.

Department faculty also recognized that the event symbolizes a transition in students' lives. "I am always so impressed by the quality of research I see our undergraduates conducting," said Donald Smith, an associate professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice who has taught the course ever since it was developed.

ODU-NABCJ Stays Involved

Twelve students attended the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ) annual training institute that was held in Jacksonville, Florida in July. At the training institute, the students attended numerous seminars and workshops related to the criminal justice field, attended the career expo, attended special events such as the "Mardi Gras" dance and formal banquet, met and networked with criminal justice professionals from across the country, and toured the city. NABCJ's annual training institute will be held in Dallas, TX from July 15 to July 21, 2005.

More recently, ODU-NABCJ hosted a presentation on October 29th by Warden Carlyle Holder. Executive Director of the Youth Action Network, Holder is the Warden of the Federal Correctional Facility in Coleman, Florida. Holden provided students with insight on how to prepare for careers in criminal justice and social services. Participating in the seminar as presenters and discussants were ODU students **Kendra Rose, Ronald Williams, Erica George, and Gia Dyke**. Dozens of students attended the event.

Finally, It's that time of the year again. The Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice and ODU-NABCJ will be sponsoring the sale of departmental t-shirts and sweatshirts through November 19th. Orders will be back by Tuesday, November 23. The cost of the t-shirts is \$12.00 and sweatshirts are \$36.00, with sizes ranging from adult sizes small thru extra large. There is an additional charge of \$2 for XXL and \$3 for XXXL.

For additional information contact any of the following students:

Gia Dyke at gdyke001@odu.edu
Misty Waytes at mwayt001@odu.edu
Marcella Lamar at mlama002@odu.edu
Jermica Howard at jhowa010@odu.edu
Kendra Rose at kenmonae@hotmail.com
Ronald Williams kamron2004@yahoo.com

Number of SOC/CRJS Majors Increases

The number of Sociology and Criminal Justice majors has increased dramatically over the last four years. Here is a breakdown of the number of declared and intended majors:

- 2000—520
- 2001—576
- 2002—650
- 2003—669

The popularity of our major reflects how important our programs are.

Other News:

Congratulations to our paper award winners. **Gina Sajko** and **Natasha Coy** won the Old Dominion University Center for Family Violence Education and Research (CFAVER) Graduate Student Research Paper Awards, and **Rachel Cox** won the Susan Kent Sociology and Criminal Justice Research Paper Award. The CFAVER awards were awarded last spring as part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week and the latter award was given as part of the Spring Sociology and Criminal Justice Research Day.

Meet Your Peer Advisor, Crystal Carey

Age: 24

From: Franklin Springs, Georgia (don't worry no one knows where it is)

Hobbies: Watching Football, Playing Tennis and Racquetball, Hanging out with hubby

Children: Dudley (2 yr old French Mastiff) & Dixie (1.5 yr old, 180 lb, English Mastiff)

Interests: Family Violence Issues; Race, Gender, & Policing

Why Grad School: Why not? ☺ After graduating from the University of Georgia I had to decide between 3 options: 1) the real world, 2) law school, or 3) grad school. Obviously option 1 was out, and after pondering for a while I thought "Who wants a 25 year old lawyer anyways?" not to mention the fact that grad school was a chance to learn more about research, more about the field I love, and a chance to delve in the world of "professorship" (my word of course).

Why ODU: Well besides the fact that my husband is stationed in Norfolk... Old Dominion's Applied Sociology is well known, has a great reputation, and incredible professors who want nothing more than to encourage you and help you make it through two of the toughest years of education you have ever experienced. From the minute I inquired into ODU's program, I knew it was the place for me - small classes, lots of willing professors, and most of all a dedication to commitment and the success of its students.

Office Location: BAL 806

Office Hours: Tuesday 8-11, Wednesday 1:30-3:30

Tips on Scholarships from Crystal

As most college students know – college is expensive and it isn't getting any cheaper. It is essential that every student know what financial aid is available to them, and more importantly – how to access it. ODU offers approximately 20 scholarships for incoming freshmen. These scholarships are awarded on the basis of various things ranging from place of residence to SAT scores to financial need. ODU also offers approximately 100 other scholarships annually to returning students. Of these 100 scholarships, not one is designated specifically for Criminal Justice or Sociology majors. This presents a problem. Of the 100 scholarships available to returning students, only 35 of those are not designated for specific disciplines. In other words, not only do you have to compete with the 600 other criminal justice and sociology majors for these, but also the thousands of other students who aren't lucky enough to have major-specific scholarships.

To get around this dilemma, criminal justice students are encouraged to apply for other types of scholarships on top of the general scholarships offered at ODU. The following associations offer at least one or more annual scholarships and they are only available to criminal justice and sociology majors: American Criminal Justice Association, National Association for Blacks in Criminal Justice, Alpha Phi Sigma, American Society of Criminology, Virginia Sheriff's Institute, Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Southern Criminal Justice Association, Midwestern Criminal Justice Association, Pacific Criminal Justice Association, and finally the American Sociological Association. So even though these are national scholarships and there will be competition, it is important to keep in mind that at least there are some scholarships that are specific to your major, you just have to get out there and find them! So happy scholarship hunting!

Did you know?

The number of publications by Sociology and Criminal Justice faculty has been increasing over the last few years.

Here's a breakdown:

- 2001—18
- 2002—27
- 2003—34

We also have 42 articles "in press." This refers to articles that are scheduled for publication. Their productivity will certainly help improve the recognition of the program and the value of your degree.

Announcements

- **Research Day** will be held December 7th in the Newport News Room in the Webb Center from 12:30-3:30. Come see what research undergraduate and graduate students have been working on!
- **Two internship positions** for Spring 2005 are available in the department. The first is serving as the department's peer advisor. Duties include holding office hours and answering questions students have about the department. Contact Dr. Triplett for more information. The second is serving as an intern in the Center for Family Violence Education and Research. Duties include assisting in organizing panels and symposia, advertising the Center's events, and serving as a liaison between the professional community and faculty members working with the Center. Contact Dr. Payne (bpayne@odu.edu) for information.
- **Sociology and Criminal Justice Lecture Series** event will be held on November 4th at 12:30 in Constant 1024. Jack Dempsey, author of *Policing*, will be talking about current issues facing professionals working in criminal justice and human services professions. Free pizza will be provided!
- **Double majoring** in Sociology and Criminal Justice became easier under the new catalogue, especially for those who are majoring in one of our programs and minoring in another. Changes in the new catalogue allow students to double count up to fifteen hours in double majors as long as the courses are already cross listed. What this means is that those who are majoring in one of our programs and minoring in another may be able to change to a double major by taking just three additional courses beyond the minor. Dr. Triplett has developed a curriculum sheet that shows how this can be accomplished. Contact her if you are interested in double majoring in Sociology and Criminal Justice.
- **Sociology and Criminal Justice Career Day** will be held January 26th in the Webb Center. Employers from dozens of agencies are expected to attend. This is a great opportunity to learn about job opportunities, application procedures, internships, and job requirements. All majors should attend!
- **Newsletter Contest.** When was the first Sociology and Criminal Justice Department Newsletter issued? E-mail Dr. Triplett (rtriplett@odu.edu) with your answer. Whoever comes closest will win a department t-shirt. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held as a tiebreaker.

Faculty Spotlight: Xiushi Yang, Ph.D.

Growing up amid China's worst famine in the late 50s to early 60s and spending my entire grade education during a "cultural revolution" between 1966-1976, I have nevertheless been the luckier one in my family and my generation in general. Thanks to my parents and my older siblings, I was able to stay in school and assigned a job in the city after graduating from high school when many of my classmates had to go to the countryside to receive "reeducation" from the peasants. I worked for three years as a metal casting apprentice in a foundry factory before China reinstated open competition college entry in 1978. With only a few years elapsed, I was able to quickly pick up high school materials, scored reasonably well in the national college entry exam, and got into Hangzhou University majoring in economic geography/urban planning.

As a freshman, I was embarrassed when I was placed at the bottom in English and had to take English classes with other bottom-ranked students. Partly driven by ego, I spent disproportionately more time in my college years on English and surprised many, including myself, when I graduated ranked among the very top in English. In retrospect, I don't think I had any idea why I spent so much time on English other than the fact that I did not like to be ranked at the bottom. But the extra time and hard work on English turned out to be the most important investment I made in my life. More importantly, it proved to myself that I could do it if I put myself into it. That mentality helped tremendously later in both my personal life and professional development.

While working as a junior faculty member in the field of urban planning, I dreamed to become an architect and also developed interest in the demographic process—migration—that fuels the growth of cities. I continued studying English, but never thought that I would one day work and live in the United States. All that changed in 1985 when opportunities to study in the U.S. emerged. Through the Education Ministry, both the Population Council in New York and the United Nations Population Fund were offering a limited number of graduate fellowships. My knowledge about population, statistics, and particularly English helped me secure a fellowship from both sources. But I eventually came to Brown in 1986 under a United Nations fellowship to pursue my Ph.D. in sociology. This life-turning event not only changed my life/career trajectory but also taught me a lesson that has since become my personal motto: Be ready when opportunity strikes.

After receiving my Ph.D. from Brown in 1991, I spent two years doing postdoctoral research at the Carolina Population Center at UNC at Chapel Hill before joining ODU faculty in 1993. I have since developed a career of teaching and research in the field of social demography with a particular focus on migration and its impact on broader social, economic, and demographic changes. My recent and on-going research, which is funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health, focuses on migration and its impact on gender roles and demographic and health behaviors in China. The research on migration and behavioral changes is particularly exciting; it allows me to apply sociological theories and methodologies to understand migrants' heightened HIV risk behaviors as a result of migration, which carry significant implications for public health.

CDA Notes, Ruth Triplett, PhD

This fall I became the Chief Departmental Advisor for the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. Never having been chief of anything, I was a little worried about taking over the job, especially since the department has a history of remarkable CDA's – Dr. Lombardo, Dr. Payne and Dr. Sun. As I suspected, it's a difficult job, one in which you can, and must, learn something every day.

Each time the newsletter comes out, I want to take the opportunity to tell you the answers to questions that I frequently hear, or just give you some information that you need. What follows is just a bit of basic information for which I keep getting asked.

I get a lot of questions about "applying" for graduation. The University no longer requires paper applications for graduation. What happens is this – when you have earned 102 or more credit hours, you should receive an e-mail from the Office of the University Registrar (this points out the importance of getting and using your university e-mail account). It is this e-mail that says you are pending graduation. This e-mail tells you what you have left to complete in order to graduate. If you get this e-mail and believe something is incorrect, contact me, or your advisor, right away. If you do not receive this e-mail by the semester before you intend to graduate, e-mail the registrar at appgrad@odu.edu. Include in the e-mail, your name, SSN, degree, major, minor (or cluster), date you intend to graduate, name as you would like it to appear on the diploma and if you would like to pick up your diploma at the Registrar's Office or have it mailed to your permanent address.

Now something for the new students. Students want to know how they get an advisor in the department. It's easy. Once declare your major, you are assigned an advisor. If you are a major and are unsure who your advisor is check the list outside Bal 730. If you do not see your name, Ms. Farmer will be happy to help you. (And by the way, someone told me this week that he had heard you weren't allowed to change your major. That is certainly not true.)

On a final note, the vast majority of students who actually come for advising take an active part in the advising process. They aggressively seek out advising, come to advising appointments when made, come with questions, come with knowledge about where they are and where they need to go. They participate aggressively in the advising process and take responsibility for seeing that they are advised. These are not the students I worry about. It's the students who seem to see coming to advising as a chore to be gotten out of that I worry about most. Don't let it be you who thinks you are graduating, has told your parents you are graduating, and who then finds out your GPA is too low, that you need a minor but didn't know that (this actually happened!), or that you needed to take an exit writing exam.