Greetings to all in this very cold winter! The Department’s faculty members and students have been quite busy with a variety of activities. Classes, internships, research and study abroad are just some of the things keeping everyone occupied.

In this issue of the newsletter, we highlight several student and faculty endeavors. Students Donald Rhinesmith and Angelica Lieto describe their great experiences with internships. Donald spent time as a case management intern at the George W. Hill Correctional Facility, while Angelica served as an intern in the U.S. Pre-Trial Services Office in Philadelphia. They both found that their work added to and enriched their classroom studies in important ways. Maura Donnelly, meanwhile, spent a semester abroad in Cusco, Peru and reflects on her time there, including the great disparities in income and wealth she saw.

Our faculty has also been on the go. Professor Rory Kramer applied for and received a $400,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation. This is a tremendous achievement, which makes us all proud. The newsletter contains a brief explanation by Professor Kramer about the research funded by the grant and the opportunity it affords him to be a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania. Congratulations and good luck with the work!

Congratulations are also due to Professor Jill McCorkel, whose book *Breaking Women: Gender, Race and the New Politics of Imprisonment* was named as one of five finalists for the prestigious C. Wright Mills book award of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. She also received the Distinguished Scholar Award of the American Society of Criminology’s Division of Women and Crime at the American Society of Criminology meetings last November.

This is a good time to remind everyone of the upcoming Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference. Once again, Villanova will host the Conference, which brings together undergraduates from area colleges and universities to present their original research. It’s a great event and students always say how significant it was in their development as budding scholars. The Conference will be held on April 24, and I strongly encourage students to participate as presenters or as attendees.

Speaking of research, I would like to remind students of the Vreeland-Gallagher Grants that our Department offers to fund student research with our faculty members. This is a valuable and unique opportunity, so please consider it. More details are found on the Department website.

Finally, to strengthen the program and enhance student research skills, the sociology and criminology majors will now require students to take both a research methods and a data analysis course, instead of just one or the other. The new requirement only applies to those who declared the major starting January 2015, and does not affect majors who declared before then.

Good luck with the rest of the semester!

-Dr. Robert DeFina
Almost a decade ago, I decided to become a sociologist because I wanted to understand how selective educational institutions diversify and how that process affects students, especially those who traditionally do not attend those elite schools. As with many topics in sociology, the short version of what I found is that diversification is a complicated process; the bulk of the diversity in pre-college experiences at most schools is within the non-white population. There is no single “black” or “asian” or “latino” type of student at selective colleges, and colleges need to appreciate that diversity of experiences to better help students succeed.

Unfortunately, the money to support that project ran out, and the group of researchers studying that topic using the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF) turned separately to other projects. This past year, Camille Charles, a professor of Sociology and Africana Studies at Penn (and my advisor), and I worked together to revive the project and recently received news that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has agreed to fund the project over two years. As part of the project, I will be a visiting scholar in the Africana Studies program at the University of Pennsylvania for the upcoming academic year. The goal of the grant is the completion and publication of two books—one that looks specifically at the diversity within the black student population, and another that analyzes differences in graduation rates and job preparation by race. I’m excited to return to the topic and want to thank the department here for their support in that effort!

My Experience Abroad in Cusco, Peru: Indigenous Populations and Economic Disparity
-by Maura Donnelly, SOC ‘16

During the fall semester of this academic year, I was lucky enough to find myself in the beautiful and culturally significant city of Cusco, Peru, the former capital of the Incan Empire. Tourists from all over the world come to this amazing city to visit the extravagant temples and ruins, admire the world-acclaimed stone architecture, and immerse themselves in the rich culture of the Andean people. You can hear at least four different languages being spoken just walking through the Plaza de Armas. The city is geared toward these wealthy tourists passing through on their way to Machu Picchu. This is most apparent in the city’s center, where the streets are lined with shops featuring handmade jewelry and alpaca sweaters, as well as fancy restaurants that boast the delicious and diverse cuisine of the region.

But if you walk just fifteen minutes towards the outskirts of the city, you can see flocks of children – most without shoes or jackets – selling souvenirs for 1 sole (about 30 cents) a piece, trying to make money to help support their families. Nearly 1/3 of the population in the Cusco region is living in poverty. The majority of these impoverished persons are of either Quechua or Aymara descent, the two main indigenous populations in the Andean Highlands. In addition, more than half of the impoverished population consists of children 11 years of age and under! When I learned these statistics in my sociology class while studying abroad, I was shocked and perplexed: How is it that the indigenous population (and specifically children) occupies the bottom of the social and economic ladder in Peruvian society? One possible reason is the system of racial hierarchy and inequality that has dominated Peruvian society since the arrival of the Spaniards in 1532. This question is important and deserves more attention – I hope that more research will be carried out to gain a greater understanding of why this social and economic gap exists. I believe that what we uncover can help us develop strategies to combat the social injustice in Peruvian society as well as in other communities across Latin America and the world.

Professor Kramer Reflects on his $400,000 Grant

In January 2015, Dr. Jill McCorkel gave an invited lecture at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, PA as part of their celebration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Kelly Welch presented a lecture titled “Inside Ferguson: Punitive Consequences of Minority Stereotypes” as part of Philadelphia Magazine’s ThinkFestU Event at Drexel University in November 2014.

Dr. Jill McCorkel gave an invited lecture at Loyola University in New Orleans, LA on her research about women in prison in October 2014.
I chose to research, apply, and interview for an internship position at the George W. Hill Correctional Facility for several reasons. My fellow student-athletes provided me with encouragement, plus other members of the student body and professorial staff indicated that they had favorable experiences with the facility. Aside from the positive feedback, this internship was unique for the fact that it granted me the flexibility to meet my obligations as a student-athlete and receive ample work experience.

I would like to begin by mentioning that this internship had a highly competitive interviewing process. Fellow interns came from universities such as West Chester, Widener, Penn State, Cabrini, Neumann, and Rutgers. The students’ majors ranged from criminal justice to business. The opportunity to work not only with seasoned professionals, but also alongside students from other schools, benefited me personally and contributed to the overall success of this facility.

I applied to work as a case manager intern. Once I was awarded the internship, I underwent forty hours of training and certification in topics related to case management including how to conduct initial inmate interviews, contact district courts, and manage inmate profiles. I even received a brief overview of self-defense tactics. As a case manager, I was able to work inside the facility where the inmates were housed. The facility was divided into multiple housing blocks, or units, each with their own pair of full-time case managers. For the first four weeks, I was given the chance to work in various units. It was a valuable opportunity to work directly with minor offenders, maximum security inmates, juveniles, and even inmates under protective custody. This first-hand experience opened my eyes to the diversity of the inmate population at a correctional facility and broadened my perspective in terms of the range of approaches needed to properly evaluate and handle different inmates.

After a period of three to four weeks, my “intern” title was removed, and I was unofficially declared a full-time case manager. This change meant that I was given the opportunity to take full control of a caseload of up to fifty inmates, a significant increase in responsibility compared to my role as an intern. On a daily basis, I created a list of all those inmates who requested to be seen, and those who were required to be seen. My interactions with the inmates consisted of providing them with case updates and contacting probation officers, lawyers, and various court districts on their behalf. I also scheduled inmates’ visits to the on-site law library and I conducted background investigations on individuals an inmate wished to have added to their visitor’s list.

One of my most memorable experiences was when my presence was requested by several inmates from our juvenile unit. They wanted to talk face-to-face with a college student-athlete. I assured them that they still have the opportunity to go back to school, participate in athletics rather than gang activity, and turn their lives around. Overall, I believe that my interactions with inmates on a day-to-day level benefitted the inmates in many ways, including easing their experience at the facility and providing them with a stronger understanding of the criminal justice system and its procedures. The entire staff at the facility -- including administrators, security personnel, case managers, and my fellow interns -- all worked well with one another and were always supportive. I strongly recommend applying for an internship at the George W. Hill Correctional Facility to all students seeking a career in criminal justice or sociology. While classroom interactions and study are critical parts of our education, the knowledge gained in those ways can be supplemented significantly through direct observation and participation. What I learned first-hand as an intern deepened and broadened my understanding of the criminal justice system. If you become an intern at this facility, you too will grow and make a difference.
Pretrial Services: Preparing for My Future

-by Angelica Lieto, CRM '15

Last spring, the dreaded question of “what will you do this summer?” fueled my search for a useful internship. I had completed an internship the summer before at a courthouse in New Jersey and I wanted to gain additional hands-on experience in the criminal justice field. Since I had always been interested in law school, I began searching for internships at a law firm or another courthouse.

In March, after visiting the Office for Undergraduate Students and receiving the name of a Villanova alumnus who works at the U.S. Pretrial Services Office, I reached out to this new contact. In hopes of learning more about his career path, I e-mailed questions relating to his course of study, his thoughts regarding his job, and careers within the criminal justice field. The Pretrial Officer responded to my inquiries thoroughly and invited me to apply for an internship. After researching U.S. Pretrial Services more, I applied for the internship and was offered the position in May.

My internship at the U.S. Pretrial Services Office enabled me to gain hands-on experience in a federal court. While my duties and responsibilities varied from day to day, I had the chance to observe federal court proceedings, which interested me the most. Although I was not there every day, I was exposed to the federal criminal justice system. The U.S. Pretrial Services Office interviews new arrestees and provides the court with a recommendation for release before trial or detention. After the interviews, the Pretrial Officers would complete the report for the judge to read later in the afternoon. I had the opportunity to witness these initial interviews as well as accompany Pretrial Officers to the holding rooms of the FBI and U.S. Marshall in order to complete these reports.

I observed initial appearances, violations of release, arraignments, guilty pleas, and sentencings. After court, I was given the passports of defendants being detained and I completed the forms necessary for the passport to be surrendered. In addition, I also had some administrative duties, such as managing case files in the database and assisting the Officers in any manner possible.

Towards the end of my internship, I saw some high profile cases involving the Philadelphia police officers who were arrested by the FBI in a federal corruption case. I sat a row behind their family members in the courtroom, and attended court for multiple days as the judge determined whether each officer would be detained or released while awaiting their trial. A few days later, I sat in the courtroom amongst news reporters as Chaka Fattah Jr. – son of a Pennsylvania congressman -- turned himself in on fraud charges.

During my time at the U.S. Pretrial Services Office, I witnessed how the federal criminal justice system operates for drug, child pornography, and bank fraud cases. My experiences as an intern for the U.S. Pretrial Services Office were memorable and useful. I gained valuable knowledge regarding the federal system and court proceedings.