A Message from the Chair

The Eastern Sociological Association is meeting in Philadelphia next semester (February 24-27). This is a great opportunity for you to present a paper you have written (or are writing) for one of your Methods or Theory courses. There are two ways for you to participate. The first way is through a Poster session. One of the posters presented at the PA Sociological Society meeting last year is on display in the department office. The deadline to participate in the Poster session is December 15. The second way to participate in the meeting is to present your paper. You will be assigned to a group (normally consisting of four papers) and each presenter has twelve minutes to present an overview of what they did, how they did it, and what they found. This is usually accompanied by 5-6 PowerPoint slides. Abstracts for this are due on October 15.

Students headed for graduate school should seriously consider the second option. Your professor will work closely with you so you are well prepared.

Each year, approximately twenty of our majors make such presentations. Without exception, they are glad they did. Seniors may present a paper they worked on last year, so this would not involve any additional research on their part. A presentation like this is an example of “going above and beyond.” It is a great addition to any job or graduate school application and gives your professor(s) something to highlight in reference letters.

On a much sadder note, you are all aware that Frank Pat DiChiara, a student in our department, was critically injured in an auto accident recently. He turned 23 on October 8th. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

-Dr. Tom

Undergraduate Research Poster Day
Tuesday, September 21, 2010

On September 21, the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The Department of Chemistry, and the College of Engineering jointly hosted the 2010 Undergraduate Research Poster Day in the Connelly Center. On this day, undergraduate researchers were given the opportunity to present their summer research, with prizes awarded to outstanding posters.

Sociology major Alissa Ricci was a featured researcher. She presented her work entitled “Patterns of Tracking: Students, Parents, and Social Class.” Ricci examined the ways in which attitudes and behaviors of parents and early adolescents influence students’ course taking patterns and how these patterns differ by social class. Ricci’s research included using in-depth interviews of an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse sample of 80 students and 19 parents in the Los Angeles area.
Two New Courses for Spring 2011

The Sociology and Criminal Justice Department will be offering two new courses beginning in Spring 2011.

Soc 4000: US Society in Critical Perspective
Tues./Thurs., 10-11:15am

This interdisciplinary course critically examines key facets of American society, including: capitalism, inequality, and democracy. Students will explore and contrast the idealized representations of society and how things actually work. Within each major topic, several pressing concerns are studied, including the environment, consumerism, health care, the continuing significance of social class, tax policy, and militarism. The course emphasizes a sociological analysis of the issues, although ideas from economics and political science are introduced and applied as well. The course has no prerequisites.

CRJ 3700: White Collar Crime
Wed., 6:10-8:50pm

This course involves the study of white collar crime and corporate deviance based on case studies of corporations involved in unlawful activities. Throughout the course, students will be exposed to, and analyze, crimes and fraud corporations commit to maximize profits, the culture in which the crimes are committed, the organizational structures of corporations that allow such fraud to flourish, the victims and harm caused by such crimes, and the laws and regulations to deter and punish white collar criminals. The course requires class attendance and participation and one research paper.

Introducing Our Newest Faculty Member: Dr. Emmanuel David

Dr. David is an urban ethnographer with research and teaching specializations in the sociology of gender, culture, and inequality, as well as in the social psychology and the social dimensions of disasters. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he earned a Graduate Certificate in Women and Gender Studies. His doctoral research focused on a women’s group that played an instrumental role in rebuilding the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. In 2009, he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of the Philippines in Manila, where he spent several months conducting ethnographic fieldwork on gender, culture, and postcolonial identity formation.


This fall, Dr. David is teaching two courses: Introduction to Sociology and Sociology of Gender.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Dr. Allison Payne for her promotion to Associate Tenured Professor!

Rick Eckstein, Ph.D., a professor of sociology, has been named the acting director of the Center for Peace and Justice Education. The program in Peace and Justice is open to all students in the University and offers an interdisciplinary approach to topics of world peace and social justice.

Question: 28 states decreased prison population between 2007-2008, while 21 states increased prison population during that same time. Can you guess which state had the largest decline and which state had the largest growth in prison population?

Answer: Largest decline was Massachusetts. Largest growth was Pennsylvania.
Did You Know?

The Chronicle of Higher Education has listed Villanova as a top producer of Fulbright students for 2009-2010.

For more information, visit:
http://chronicle.com

Meet Our New Research Associate:

Kristen Eaton

In August 2010, Kristen Eaton joined the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice as the new Research Associate. Kristen recently completed her Masters degree in Urban Affairs and Public Policy from the University of Delaware, where she concentrated in Urban and Regional Planning. She received her undergraduate degree in Political Science from Shippensburg University in 2008.

Kristen is originally from Newtown, Pennsylvania, in nearby Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Before coming to Villanova, Kristen worked as a collegiate research assistant with the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware. While at IPA, Kristen conducted policy research related to transportation planning issues impacting the state of Delaware.

Crime and Education: Moving School Discipline from Exclusion and Criminal Justice to Restoration and Social Justice

By Dr. Allison Payne, Villanova University

Student discipline in American schools has grown increasingly severe, as evidenced by the greater use of exclusionary punishments like expulsion and suspension (Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001; Kupchik and Ellis, 2008), despite clear indications of a decrease in student delinquency and victimization (DeVoe et al., 2005, Dinkes et al., 2005). Research has demonstrated that the increase in the severity of school discipline is not related to increases in student delinquency, whether serious or minor. Yet, students are frequently punished by schools aiming to reduce delinquency in a manner that mirrors the treatment of criminals by the criminal justice system, as school policy has taken a crime control approach to student violations. A consequence of these changes in student discipline is that schools are becoming more like prisons focused on punishment and are banishing students through exclusionary punishments much the same way that society banishes criminals through incarceration (Giroux, 2003; Nogera, 2008; Watts and Erevelles, 2004).

Certain education policies are partially to blame for this increase in harsh punishments. In particular, several goals of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act create incentives for schools to exclude certain students. For example, in an effort to increase school safety and avoid the label of “persistently dangerous,” some schools may simply expel those students who cause the most trouble (Cook et al., 2010). In addition, schools may “push out” students who threaten to pull down academic test scores and hinder schools’ efforts in achieving adequate yearly progress (AYP); by suspending or expelling low-performing students, schools can increase their test scores without any additional resources (Carroll, 2008). Although President Obama has called for a major redesign of NCLB, these changes are unlikely to alter this “pushing out” phenomenon. One proposed change calls for a focus on individual student growth rather than overall school performance on standardized tests (Quaid, 2010); this would presumably lead to a decrease in the exclusion of under-performing students by allowing them to be judged on their own change not by how they impact the larger school’s progress. However, the heart of the overhaul focuses on linking NCLB to the Administration’s newer education policy, Race to the Top, which has dedicated $4.35 billion in grant money to reward

Villanova University Among Most Sustainable Universities in the Nation

The Sierra Club’s annual “Cool Schools” ranking judged universities for their performance in 10 categories: Energy Supply, Efficiency, Food, Academics, Purchasing, Transportation, Waste Management, Administration, Financial Investments, and Other Initiatives. Of the more than 2,000 four year colleges and universities in the U.S., a total of 163 universities nationwide made the list, with Villanova ranked #53.
Crime and Education  Continued from Page 3

Schools if they demonstrate action to improve academic standards (Dillon, 2010). Making the receipt of grant money conditional upon improved overall school efficiency would again seem only to increase the pushing out of undesirable students.

Studies have demonstrated the consequences of exclusionary disciplinary responses to misbehavior. Students who are suspended or expelled experience a range of negative academic outcomes, such as poor school performance, grade retention, negative attitudes towards schools, and dropping out. (Schiraldi and Zeidenberg, 2001; Skiba and Peterson, 1999). In addition, suspended or expelled students also experience negative behavioral outcomes, including more physical fighting, weapon-carrying, smoking, alcohol and drug use, and other delinquent acts (Nichols, 2004; Schiraldi and Zeidenberg, 2001). The increase in student exclusion clearly has consequences for students who are punished in this manner.

Exclusion and Race

In addition to the rise of student exclusion overall, it is evident that the proportion of minority students who are being excluded is disproportionate to their proportion of the school population (Carroll, 2008). For example, research has documented black students receive more punitive responses for misbehavior that is similar or even less serious than that of white students (Nichols, 2004; Noguer, 2003; Skiba et al., 2002). This racialized use of student exclusion has been shown for both suspensions and expulsions (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008). Some have argued that this is a result of minority students’ disproportionate involvement in overall delinquency or that race is merely a proxy for socioeconomic status. However, studies examining these possibilities have shown neither thesis to be a valid explanation for the overrepresentation of minority students in the use of exclusionary discipline (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008). Other explanations for this inequality are needed.

From Exclusion to Restoration

Given both the negative consequences or suspension and expulsion as well as the racial discrepancy in the use of student exclusion, it is clear that schools need to reconsider their responses to student misbehavior. An upcoming Crime and Education Presidential Plenary suggests a solution: Bazemore and Schiff (2010) offer an alternative to such punitive discipline by arguing for the use of restorative justice practices in schools. Originally applied to the criminal justice system, restorative justice interventions attempt to repair the harm caused by an offense while preventing further offenses from occurring; this is generally accomplished through conferences that seek to produce reconciliation between offenders, victims, and community members (Sherman, 2003). Results of randomized controlled trials of restorative conferences shows lower levels of recidivism, particularly in the case of violent offenses (Sherman, 2003).

Restorative justice practices were first implemented in schools in Australia in 1994 and studies since then have illustrated the effectiveness of restorative justice conferences as a response to student misbehavior (Blkood and Thorsborne, 2005). Completely counter to student exclusion, restorative practices focuses on relationships, shifting from punishment and isolation to reconciliation and community (Morrison et al., 2005). Some have argued that restorative justice is best applied to the school context because of the nature of relationships in these institutions, where students see each other day after day (Morrison et al., 2005). Thus, Bazemore and Schiff propose that a restorative justice approach to discipline, combined with a focus on routine activities and communal school organization, offers a model of inclusionary dialogue that repairs harm and creates a whole-school environment of supportive relationships, accountability, and peacemaking values.

This is a portion of an article Dr. Payne published in the September/October 2010 volume of The Criminologist, the official newsletter of the American Society of Criminology. For the complete article and a list of sources, visit http://www.asc41.com/criminologist.html