A Message from the Chair

After your GPA, the most important items on your resume are your extracurricular activities. Not all of these activities are equal. Activities related to your academic work demonstrate extra commitment to your education and increased knowledge of your field of study. Internships and Service Learning courses are excellent examples. Internships allow you to “test drive” a potential career; Service Learning courses provide you with the opportunity to use the “real world” as your “lab.” These courses give you the opportunity to improve your education through the experience of helping others. Your participation in these activities are also used by your professors to enrich your letters of recommendation. I encourage you to speak with Dr. Waegel or myself about the many excellent Internship opportunities available.

Once again, the Department is offering four courses (see page 2) with service opportunities. The Prison Literacy Program is strongly recommended as an option within CRJ 3400, but can also be completed as part of other Criminal Justice courses (or CRJ 5000).

On behalf of my colleagues in the Department, I wish all the graduating seniors good luck. Please keep us apprised of your activities. If we can ever help you out, please do not hesitate to ask.

—Dr. Thomas Arvanites

Featured Professor—Dr. Donna Shai

I often tell students that my specialization in Sociology is Demography, the study of population, and that my research area is Alaska. Before going to Alaska four years ago, I had been doing demographic research on injuries. In graduate school, my professors convinced me that studying how people in different socioeconomic classes get injured could reveal the social forces at work in their lives. For several years, I studied fire injuries in Philadelphia, which has one of the highest fire injury rates in America. Tragically, many poor children die in house fires. Like most demographers, I used the Census to get socioeconomic data about the areas I studied. Since I was interested in the neighborhood conditions, I concentrated on the census tract. Very few demographers had looked at fire injuries and almost no one had studied them in Philadelphia. I enjoyed getting to know the members of the Philadelphia Fire Department and spent many interesting hours interviewing them, asking questions, sharing their frustrations over deadly fires, and discussing ideas for preventing injuries. A number of articles resulted from that research.

When I visited Alaska, I knew that it also had a high injury rate from fires, so I decided to use what I had (cont. on page 4)
Education Come to Life: About Service Learning

Interested in adding a service learning component to your schedule in the fall? See Dr. Arvanites regarding the type of Service Learning you are interested in and how it may fit into your schedule (Thomas.arvanites@villanova.edu; 610-519-4774). You must block off at least 3 hours per week for your activity, not including travel time, and also contact Ms. Noreen Cameron of the Service Learning Office this March to fill out any necessary forms, complete background checks, and to register with the Service Learning Office (Noreen.cameron@villanova.edu; 610-519-6251).

Service Learning Opportunities in the Fall 2008 Semester

Dr. Defina, Perspectives on U.S. Poverty (SOC 2950, TR 10-11:15) — This course examines different aspects of poverty in the United States, emphasizing what William Julius Wilson calls the “new urban poverty.” The course has a service learning format that will involve tutoring once a week at the Cooke Middle School in Philadelphia.

Dr. Payne, Crime & Delinquency Prevention (CRJ 4000, MWF 10:30-11:20) — This course will include a service learning requirement of mentoring at-risk students in Philadelphia as they transition from 8th to 9th grade. Currently, the CRJ section is restricted to sophomore service learning community.

Dr. Strickler, Introduction to Sociology (SOC 1000-004, MW 1:30-2:45) — In addition to introducing students to key concepts, theories and purposes of sociology, this course will contain a service learning component. Details to follow shortly; the site of the Service Learning will be determined before registration.

Dr. McCorkel, Penology & Corrections (CRJ 3400, TR 10:00-11:15) — In this course, we will interrogate the nature of modern punishment and how forms of punishment are a product of American political culture. Students may choose to write a research paper or (if a junior or a senior) participate in the prison literacy program at Graterford Prison once per week. After completing a prison orientation, students will tutor inmates 3 hours per week in the State Correctional Institution at the Graterford prison. Since you are required to tutor in the prison 1 day a week, Monday through Friday, from either 8:15 - 11:20 am or 12:15 - 3:45 pm (including travel time) you must leave one block of time free in your schedule for tutoring.

NOTE: All SOC/CRJ majors (juniors and seniors) who are enrolled in any Fall CJ course are eligible to participate through the CJ course or through CRJ 4000. See Dr. Arvanites for more information.

Attention Criminal Justice Students!

As of this month, Dr. Lance Hannon will be taking over the graduate Master of Arts program in Criminal Justice. Feel free to contact him with any questions regarding the five-year B.A./M.A. program or the two-year M.A. program. (Lance.hannon@villanova.edu; 610-519-4776)
Alumni and Students in the News

Joelle Sano (Sociology, Class of 2004) has begun work on her Ph.D. dissertation at Boston College. She will be returning to the Philadelphia area this summer and will be teaching a course or two for our Department in the fall.

Jocelyn Fontaine (Sociology, Class of 2003) has recently obtained her Masters of Science in Justice, Law & Society from American University in 2005. In addition to winning the American Society of Criminology’s 2007 Minority Fellowship Award, she is also working on her Ph.D. there in the same field with a concentration in Policy Analysis. In addition to her busy academic schedule, Jocelyn is also working for the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C., as a Research Associate.

Our own M.A. students Kristin Lavin (Sociology and Psychology, Concentration in Criminal Justice, Class of 2006) and Julie Yingling (2006, Valparaiso University) presented papers at the American Society of Criminology in November in Atlanta. Kristin has been accepted thus far into two excellent Ph.D. programs—University of Maryland, College Park, and Florida State University, and is still waiting to hear from several others. Julie also plans to attend a doctoral program in the fall in order to study substance abuse, social justice, and racial issues.

Sarah Blanchard (Sociology, concentrations in Honors, Peace and Justice, and Ethics; Minors in Spanish and Philosophy, Class of 2008) has been accepted thus far to the University of Texas at Austin’s Ph.D. program in Sociology with five years of funding. She is waiting to hear from other schools in the meantime and plans to focus her studies on social stratification, inequality, and immigration. Congratulations is also due to Lauren Aulds (Sociology, Minors in English and Spanish, Class of 2008) who has accepted a position at Citizens Bank in their Marketing Leadership Development Program for the fall of 2008.

An Internship Experience in Washington, D.C.

By Karen Olinchak, Class of 2009

This semester, I am studying abroad... well, not really abroad. I am currently in Washington, D.C. completing an internship arranged by The Washington Center (TWC). TWC arranges internships for undergraduate and graduate students in the D.C. area. Most students take a class offered by TWC while forming a portfolio, which consists of journals and a civil engagement project, among many other tasks. TWC also has various speakers address their students; for example, John J. Miller, a former reporter and current Assistant Director of the FBI, recently spoke to my program about his diverse career, which included the last interview with Osama bin Laden. We also take tours of various facilities, such as jails, the Pentagon, and embassies.

In addition to TWC activities, I also work an internship at the Children’s Rights Council (CRC). The CRC is giving me real-life experience in working for a small non-profit organization. Because it is a smaller organization, I have been given a lot of responsibility and am encouraged to sit in and participate in important meetings. We see legislation in action because we go to Capitol Hill on a weekly basis and meet with various Congresspersons to push our legislation. I also write testimonies for state bills pertaining to our agenda to be read in the Maryland General Assembly.

You may be wondering why (cont. on page 4)
Dr. Donna Shai, Demographer
Cont. from page 1
learned about Philadelphia to study the situation in Anchorage. Anchorage Municipality is the size of the State of Delaware, but much of it is wilderness. Since almost no one in Alaska uses census tracts, I needed to get official census maps from the federal government and then map out Anchorage census tracts using street maps, an Atlas, and even guidebooks. The Anchorage Fire Department and Police Department provided me with data, and using newspaper surveillance I was able to get an understanding of the circumstances around each fire injury. My most interesting experiences were actually seeing the neighborhoods in my study and talking informally with firefighters about their experiences and some of the unique conditions they work under. For example, it is not unusual for firefighters and their equipment to become completely immobilized by ice when the temperature is well below zero, as it often is in Alaska. On the basis of the research, I was able to come up with a fire injury prevention program that suited the particular conditions of Alaska.

When I finished that research, it was suggested that I study homicide, a growing problem in Anchorage. The pattern of homicide in Alaska is unusual in that women are proportionately more likely to be homicide victims than in other states. I followed 155 cases of homicide in Anchorage from 1999 to 2006, analyzing the homicides in their larger cultural and social context. Clues to the unusual pattern emerged in the demographics of Anchorage, including selective migration, increasing ethnic diversity, differences in income, the large proportion of women in the workforce, the effects of individualism, and a distinctive Alaskan masculinity. I have been invited to discuss my methods and findings at the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska.

When your subject is Alaska, every research project is an adventure.

One Student’s Internship Experiences
Cont. from page 3
I decided to come spend a semester in D.C. instead of going overseas or simply staying at Villanova. I love Villanova, and I was extremely reluctant to leave. However, I knew that leaving for a semester would allow me to grow personally and professionally, and that I wanted to do an internship where I could get a taste of what I may want to do in the future. Also, life was becoming a bit stagnant at Villanova, and I thought that a change of environment would help me refocus and recharge. However, I didn’t want to go too far away from my family or friends, so I decided that D.C. would be perfect. The TWC program is also great because they arrange for you to live with other students.

So far, this internship is allowing me to encounter things that aren’t offered inside the classroom. I love my internship because I get to be in a place where change is actually occurring. D.C. is also a great place to meet people from other backgrounds; for example, I live with someone from Mexico and work with a South Korean. It has been wonderful to become friends with people with such a diverse background and opinions. At Villanova, it’s easy to surround yourself with familiar people and perspectives; however, because D.C. is such a diverse area, I am given an opportunity to experience and learn about many different cultures every day.