A Message from the Chair

One of the many challenges to teaching Methods or Theory is convincing students that the skills (critical thinking, research & writing) we stress will someday be relevant to their lives. Many students have said to me, “I am not going to be a professor, so why do I need this?” (As an undergraduate I certainly did not see myself as a professor.) These students are quite correct; the vast majority of sociology majors do not become professors or sociologists. However, each year we hear from former students who remind us that these skills are serving them well down the road.

This week I received an email from Courtney DeRose (2005) who is currently a Market Manager for the American Diabetes Association. She contacted me about internship opportunities that exist within the agency and made the following comments about her educational experience at Villanova:

“I use SO MANY of the skills I learned in my theory and methods courses in my job everyday... Tell your students that it has been over 2 years since I presented my paper at the Mid-Atlantic Conference and I still talk about it. I also think about it every time I get up to give a speech about what I have been working on to corporate officers (and it is good practice because college students are kinder audiences then CEOs)”

I would like to empha-

size her final point. The classroom is a great place to develop new skills. It is a supportive environment because everyone in the class (yes, even the professor) wants each student to succeed.

Switching topics, we welcome Dana Moss, our new Research Associate to the Department. Dana comes to us from Loyola College in Maryland where she earned her B.A. in Sociology and Writing. After teaching special education in two “high-needs” schools in Philadelphia, she is glad to be back in the field of sociology working with faculty on various projects. Please feel free to stop by her office in SAC 204 with your questions.

—Dr. Tom Arvanites

Two Professors Join Faculty for Fall Semester

The Sociology Department is pleased to welcome two new full-time faculty members who will begin teaching this fall. The first is Dr. Jill McCorkel, an Assistant Professor from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the second is Dr. Allison Ann Payne, an Assistant Professor from the College of New Jersey.

Dr. McCorkel is a returning native of Philadelphia and is currently working on a variety of research projects involving crime, law, and inequality. Her soon-to-be-published book titled Unruly Subjects: Gender, Punishment, and the Self, is based on an ethnography she conducted from 1994 to 1998 in a women’s state prison. Her articles have appeared in Social Politics, Symbolic Interaction, and the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography. Dr. McCorkel has taught a variety (cont. page 4)
More than 58% of female baby boomers have saved less than $10,000 in a pension or a 401K plan.

-Liz Perle, author
Money, A Memoir

Among workers with an employer’s retirement plan, 38% were covered by a traditional company pension in 2003, down from 81% in 1981.

-Jonathan Clements
The Wall Street Journal
March 8, 2006

The average woman born between 1946 and 1964 will likely be in the workforce until she is 74 years old due to inadequate financial savings.

-Liz Perle, author
Money, A Memoir

Pursuing Graduate Studies
by Joelle Sano, Class of 2004

After graduating from Villanova with a degree in sociology in May of 2004, I entered a doctoral program in sociology at Boston College that September. Now that I am finishing my second year in the program, I realize how my experiences with the sociology department have helped me work towards a Ph.D.

Academically, I found that my undergraduate coursework prepared me for the intense workload and challenging courses of the doctoral program. This has been particularly true in my required statistics, methods, and theory courses. The major requirements provided a strong background for me so I could apply the course material to my own research interests. The time management skills I gained also aided my transition to graduate school; this has enabled me to complete my coursework, be a teacher’s assistant, and pursue my own research interests.

Because of the strength and range of my coursework at Villanova, I was able to secure a research position with a Boston Labor Union consulting firm in my first semester of graduate school. I am currently working on two major research projects. The first examines labor union education in public schools; the second involves uncovering the workplace assets of young, inner-city adults, who are a widely underutilized labor force.

Moreover, the extra-academic skills I learned as an undergraduate have been extremely beneficial to me in this program. The meaningful discussions that took place in my sociology classes prepared me to participate in my graduate classes and to continue these conversations outside of the classroom. For example, the course titled Education and Social Justice with Dr. Eckstein helped motivate me to pursue my Ph.D. Taking Penology and Corrections with Dr. Arvanites made me question my ideas about prisons and the prison population; our visit to a prison was particularly eye-opening. Also, participating in the Honors Teaching Practicum with Dr. DeFina was especially helpful because I was able to experience many aspects of teaching at the college level and hone the necessary time-management skills for a Ph.D. program.

To any readers thinking about applying for graduate school, I would recommend considering the surrounding areas of the schools you want to attend. Going to school in Boston has provided me with research opportunities and connections outside of my program that are not possible in other places. Also, in the case that you do not receive funding from your graduate program, look for outside funding opportunities on that school’s graduate student website. Often there are lists of opportunities and available funding sources that are not widely published. I would also advise you to investigate the program faculty in order to determine if their concentrations are similar to your interests. In most graduate programs it is necessary to work closely with at least one professor, so make sure you have some common interests!

Developing ties to your professors now will prove to be invaluable in the future. The relationships I developed with the faculty at Villanova have made me more comfortable working with faculty at the graduate level. (I still communicate with Dr. Eckstein on a regular basis about the peaks and valleys of the graduate experience.) Most importantly, I found the confidence in myself and the inspiration from my professors to pursue a Ph.D. in sociology. I am grateful to the department for granting me the experiences necessary for a meaningful career in sociology.

Interactions
Villanova Hosts the 26th Annual Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference

Villanova University will be hosting this year’s 26th annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference, which will be held on Thursday, April 20th and begin at 10 a.m. The conference, which provides students in the Mid-Atlantic region a forum for reporting the results of research projects and internship experiences, will feature panel and poster presentations by undergraduates from assorted universities and academic backgrounds. Villanova students have gained valuable presentation experience and recognition by participating in this conference in the past, which was held last year at Elizabethtown College. All faculty and students are welcome to attend and learn about the contributions of undergraduates to empirical and theoretical research. Feel free to visit the conference website for up-to-date information as it becomes available at www.mausrc.com as the session schedule is subject to change. Good luck and congratulations to our Villanova presenters!

Since the Iraq War began in March 2003, an average of nearly 16 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in action each day.

Chances of Being Wounded, By Conflict:

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<th>Conflict</th>
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<tr>
<td>Korean War</td>
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<td>Vietnam War</td>
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<td>Iraq War</td>
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<td>World War II</td>
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(Newsweek, 3/20/06)

...Parents are increasingly leaving their kids to pick up the tab for college. Over the 10 years through the 2004-2005 academic year, annual borrowing through student and parent loans jumped 194%. That’s far ahead of the 66% increase in the total cost of four-year private colleges or the 72% rise at public colleges, according to the College Board...

-Jonathan Clements
The Wall Street Journal
March 8, 2006
Two Professors Join Faculty
Cont. from Page 1

of both undergraduate and graduate classes including the sociology of law, crime, penology, gender, and urban studies. She looks forward to continuing her research of the consequences of mass incarcerations in Philadelphia while working closely with her future students at Villanova.

Dr. Payne has worked extensively on researching and implementing school-based violence prevention programs. This includes the innovative Positive Action for Holistic Education (PATHE) program for which she was program director. Dr. Payne hopes to continue her work in this field with the aid of several pending grants. Her publications include journal articles published in Criminology, the Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, and Prevention Science. She is also author of a book titled School Community and Disorder and a chapter found in Bullying: Implications for the Classroom. Dr. Payne has a great deal of experience teaching criminology, policy analysis, juvenile delinquency, and independent undergraduate research projects. She looks forward to joining the Department of Sociology.

It’s clear from a brief look at their accomplishments that both Dr. Payne and Dr. McCorkel will make invaluable contributions to the growing department. Beginning this fall, Professor Payne will be teaching “Introduction to Criminal Justice,” “Criminal Justice Research Methods,” and a CRJ graduate course titled “Theories of Crime and Delinquency.” Professor McCorkel will be teaching “Penology and Corrections” and “Drugs and Society” in the undergraduate criminal justice section. Please join us in welcoming them to our campus this fall.

Featured Professor—Dr. Kelly Welch
Cont. from page 3

I’m also looking forward to teaching two graduate courses in the Criminal Justice Program’s new master’s program, beginning in the Fall: Seminar in Social Justice and Punishment & Society. Of course, when I am not teaching or doing research, you can probably find me watching Food Network, cooking semi-vegetarian meals, jogging, or traveling to my hometown of San Diego (though, I have to admit that I don’t get to do this one as often as I would like). Living in Philadelphia is another thing I would have never expected I would be doing, but so far I am having a great time!

—Dr. Kelly Welch