A Message from the Chair

Welcome to the first edition of Interactions. The Department will publish this newsletter early each semester. The purpose: to deliver department news, to call your attention to important activities and to encourage you to take advantage of all that Villanova has to offer (after all—you’re paying for these opportunities).

In tight job markets (which often results in increased applications to graduate school) students are always looking for ways to distinguish themselves. One way to accomplish this goal is an internship. There are many opportunities in a variety of different organizations which can provide you with “real world” experience, job contacts and an opportunity to “test drive a career.”

The second way is to document your communication skills and your initiative. Last April, nineteen sociology students presented their research at the Mid-Atlantic Undergraduate Social Research Conference. This is a wonderful addition to applications for employment or grad school. It also gives your professors something to hype in their otherwise routine recommendations. I encourage you to speak with your professors (current or former) about this opportunity. This year’s conference is April 22.

Good luck this semester. Please do not hesitate to contact your professors if you have any problems with your courses.

— Dr. Tom Arvanites

Welcome Professor DeFina!

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Robert DeFina will be joining the Department of Sociology this coming fall.

He is currently Professor of Economics in the College of Commerce and Finance where he holds the John A. Murphy Endowed Chair. Since coming to Villanova in 1989, Dr. DeFina has also served as the Director of the Center for Peace and Justice Education, and is currently a member of the University Rank and Tenure Committee and the University Mission Effectiveness Committee. He has developed and taught service-learning courses, has led a Habitat for Humanity trip, and has pursued a research and teaching agenda focused on poverty and income inequality. His articles have appeared in numerous journals, including the Review of Economics and Statistics, Social Science Research and Social Science Quarterly. Most recently, he is studying the relationship between crime and unemployment with Professor Tom Arvanites. Professor DeFina is co-editor of the Journal of Catholic Social Thought. The Sociology Department is grateful to Dean Kail Ellis, OSA, Dean Thomas Monahan and Dr. John Johannes for supporting this initiative.

In the fall he will be teaching Poverty and the U.S. Economy and The Social Safety Net. Course descriptions will be available prior to March registration.
The presentation will be held on:

**Thursday, April 3rd at 11:30 in Bartley 1011.** Mark your calendars now for what you will find to be a very informative discussion. It will provide you with valuable information on occupations and how Sociology prepares you for many diverse careers.

There will be a short presentation by each graduate followed by a question and answer session.

**P.S. Sophomores and juniors take note.** It is never too early to begin thinking about life after Villanova.

### Career Opportunities for Sociology Majors

If you are like many Sociology Majors, you are asking yourself, “*What can I do with my Sociology degree?*” To provide you with concrete answers to that question, the Sociology Department is sponsoring a special presentation, “Career Opportunities for Sociology Majors.”

Three Sociology graduates will be speaking about their career paths since graduation. They include:

**Kristine Brennan,** Class of 1998. After a few years with Andersen Consulting in their international division, Kristine is now a consultant with Akibia in New York where she focuses on business process engineering, application analysis, design, development, deployment and end-user training for companies who are implementing a Siebel software application solution.

**Maria Rubino,** Class of 1999. Maria started her career at Lehman Brothers Investment and is now a grant administrator with an international pharmaceutical company.

**Norm Vetter,** Class of 1989. Norm is the Mental Health Director of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

The presentation will be held on:

**Thursday, April 3rd at 11:30 in Bartley 1011.** Mark your calendars now for what you will find to be a very informative discussion. It will provide you with valuable information on occupations and how Sociology prepares you for many diverse careers. There will be a short presentation by each graduate followed by a question and answer session.

**P.S. Sophomores and juniors take note.** It is never too early to begin thinking about life after Villanova.

### Message to the Seniors

It is a safe bet that many of you are surprised at how quickly you have arrived at the final semester of your college career. As a major rite of passage approaches, you experience a sudden change in your master status which often results in an acute case of anomie. (The ability to incorporate many sociological terms in one sentence comes from watching my kids cram numerous spelling words into a single sentence.) It is **not uncommon** for graduating seniors to be unsure of their future. The truth is, your sociology degree will help you do many things. I encourage you to come to the above career presentation to hear Maria and Kristine discuss their career paths since graduating. It will be a very encouraging presentation.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you ever need a recommendation. Believe it or not, we do remember the names of former students. Please keep us informed of your career and/or graduate school experiences by logging on to our department web page and completing the Alumni Contact form. On behalf of my colleagues, we wish you the very best.

— Dr. Tom Arvanites
Looking Back to College as a 1st Year Law Student  
**By Megan (Baksa) Dalton ’02**

In August of this past year, I began my career as a law student at Villanova. While I had just graduated from college a few months earlier, I had no idea what was ahead of me. The adjustments from college to professional school are in no way small or gradual. While the workload is rather daunting and the classes are challenging, I never once doubted my decision to become an attorney. While my motivation and enthusiasm for the law are certainly contributing factors, I must also acknowledge my undergraduate education for providing a firm foundation for my career.

As an undergraduate at Villanova, I was a Sociology major with a Criminal Justice Concentration. Throughout my years studying Sociology, the majority of my classes encompassed tackling research and writing effectively and clearly. While the rigors of law school demand much from an aspiring attorney, **critical reading, writing, and analytical skills are absolutely necessary for success in the field.** A law student uses logic and reasoning on an everyday basis, whether discerning a court’s decision, writing a brief, or simply taking notes in class. My undergraduate experiences provided me with a great advantage in starting law school in that I was already exposed to analytical thinking and writing. Although no one specific major is required to enter law school, skills that involve research, writing, and logical reasoning are indispensable. These are the very aspects of college education that are utilized as a starting point for future growth and development as a lawyer. I am truly thankful for my Sociology background and all that I learned as an undergraduate. **Looking back, I would not change anything, and I would highly recommend a degree in Sociology for those interested in pursuing law.**

— Megan Dalton ’02

**New Sociology Courses**

Look for these classes coming Fall 2003:

- **Soc 2950 — Perspectives on U.S. Poverty**  
  (Dr. DeFina T/R 11:30-12:45)

- **Soc 4000 — The Social Safety Net**  
  (Dr. DeFina T/R 1:00-2:15)

- **Soc 4100 — Special Topics: Capital Punishment**  
  (Mr. Ellis M/W 6:00-7:15)  
  (Mr. Ellis works with the Philadelphia Public Defenders Office and is involved in death penalty mitigation hearings.)
Internship Experience
By Allison Cunningham ’04

If I could offer you a tip for the future, I would suggest an internship. The internship experience was incredible. I decided to do my first internship with the Bucks County Department of Parole. At first I worked with a probation officer, but soon, I received my own caseload where I was responsible for monitoring children that were placed under my direction, as well as meeting with the juvenile's family and school. I was able to impact the life of a child by working with them one on one.

From this internship I learned so many valuable lessons that one could never learn in the classroom. It was fulfilling to apply what I have learned in the classroom to real life work. In the past six months, when applying for jobs or just talking to people, they are impressed with what I have learned and gained from this experience. An internship on your resume, says to an employer that you are serious about your major and career. Doing an internship also helped me narrow down what I wanted to do within my major. Interning is an experience that you cannot obtain in the classroom. It is a wonderful opportunity, and I would strongly encourage anyone to really get involved in your major and do at least one internship before you graduate. It impacts not only your resume, but your future as well.

Sociology Facts Quiz

1. What percentage of hungry U.S. Households have one full-time worker?
   A) 17%  B) 27%  C) 47%  D) 57%

2. What is the fastest growing group of homeless people in the United States?
   A) Elderly  B) Veterans  C) African American Males  D) Families with Children

3. Homeless shelters outnumber animal shelters by a 2:1 ratio.
   A) True  B) False

4. The wealthiest fifth of the world consumes what percentage of the world’s resources?
   A) 47%  B) 63%  C) 86%  D) 95%

5. Families with children comprise what percent of homeless in the U.S.?
   A) 40%  B) 30%  C) 25%  D) 20%