Greetings to all. I hope that everyone had a restful and enjoyable summer and that you are off to a good start to the academic year.

After long years of service, Professors Bernie Gallagher and Donna Shai have decided to retire. Professor Gallagher came to Villanova in 1971 with a specialty in social psychiatry. He taught a very popular course of the same name, in addition to one on the sociology of occupations. His social psychiatry course explored the interactions between social conditions and mental health, a subject he delved into in some detail in his research. He was a prolific writer and published a large number of academic studies on the topic as well as a book. In 1993, he was awarded Villanova’s Outstanding Faculty Research Award. He also took pride in involving students in his research, and several of his publications were co-authored with them. One such student, Carolyn Everson, was especially thankful and affected by the experience. Now an executive at Facebook, Carolyn is donating funds to the department to support ongoing student research with faculty. Her admiration for Professor Gallagher was reflected in her naming of the grant—The Vreeland-Gallagher Grant for Undergraduate Research (Vreeland in honor of her parents). Professor Gallagher should also be recognized for organizing a regular forum on Gay and Lesbian issues for students and faculty.

Professor Shai was somewhat of a rarity in the University. She had two Ph.D.’s, one in demography and one in anthropology. She arrived at Villanova in 1983 after studying at the University of Pennsylvania and Oxford University. In addition to introduction to sociology, Professor Shai taught courses on cultural anthropology and sociology of the family. Her research was wide-ranging. She has deep knowledge about native Alaskans and Orthodox Jews, and published a number of academic articles about them. Over the years, her love for Alaska and its people led her to focus her research there, where she completed several studies on fire deaths and mobile home populations. She remained active throughout her career, and continued to write and present her research at academic meetings right up until her decision to retire. She also was an active member of the Faculty Congress. In terms of outside interests, Professor Shai developed a passion for painting, something she wants to do more of with her increased free time.

Congratulations Bernie and Donna! We will miss you. Thanks for your dedication to Villanova and the department. Good luck in this next phase of your life.

In light of the retirements, the department will be hiring two new professors this academic year. The department decided that it would be best served by focusing on faculty members who are experts in medical sociology and in social movements. These are two areas that are currently important and will only increase in importance and relevance in the future. We are in the early stages of the hiring process, but things will heat up soon enough.

This Newsletter has contributions from a department faculty member, a student and an alum. Professor Brianna Remster explains her important research with Professor Rory Kramer that focuses on how mass incarceration has influenced political representation. They recently presented their work at the annual meeting of the (continued on page 3)
Shifting Power: The Impact of Incarceration on Political Representation

- by Dr. Brianna Remster

With a contentious presidential election rapidly approaching, politics are on Americans' minds. Yet election outcomes are only one component of American democracy. In recent research with Dr. Rory Kramer (sociology faculty) we shift attention to the issue of political representation. Equal political representation is a bedrock principle of modern representative democracy; without the concept of representation, democracy would only work in small communities. Perhaps because of its importance, ensuring equal representation in the United States has been a slow, contentious, and uneven process, particularly with regard to racial and ethnic equality. Today, in both theory and practice, states must comply with the Supreme Court ruling that each citizen has the right to have her voice heard equally and that each citizen represents one vote in this process (369 U.S. 186 1962). Yet not all Americans can vote and when large voting age populations are miscounted, equal representation, and consequently, American democracy may be threatened.

In particular, prisoners are denied the right to vote in every state except Vermont and Maine and yet are counted as residents of the communities where they are incarcerated. Correctional populations are the only Americans forcibly relocated by the state, often across legislative boundaries, and importantly, the majority of prisoners originate from urban districts while prisons are disproportionately located in rural districts. As wards of the state confined within prison walls, the incarcerated are not members of these communities in any meaningful way. Moreover, the vast majority of prisoners spend only a short period of their lives behind bars and regain the right to vote upon sentence completion. When American representation was laid out in the Constitution and later specified by the Supreme Court, mass incarceration did not exist. Today, approximately one in 100 American adults is behind bars. In our research, we examine the extent to which incarceration shifts the balance of a representative democracy by considering its impact on state legislative apportionment, sometimes known as "prison gerrymandering."

Our analyses, specifically focusing on Pennsylvania state legislative districts, show how incarceration and American concepts of equal representation combine to create "phantom constituents." When we remove prisoners from the rural districts where they are incarcerated, seven districts in Pennsylvania are too small according to the Supreme Court's one person equals one vote requirement—five of which are outside of urban areas. On the other hand, when we relocate prisoners back to their home districts (where they lived prior to incarceration), at least three districts grow too large according to the same Supreme Court ruling, all in Philadelphia. While three districts represent a small percentage of the state legislature, it means that over 100,000 black residents of Philadelphia do not experience representational equality as defined by the Supreme Court. Moreover, given modern levels of racial segregation (whites tend to live in rural areas while people of color tend to live in urban ones) and because prisoners are disproportionately people of color, we find evidence of racially unequal political representation. The incarcerated are not only missing from their communities, but advantaging other communities, without adding a single voter to those communities.

More specifically, our results show that prison location benefits the typical white voter and weakens the average black and Latino voter's representation. Our calculations show that in 2010, the average white person's district would lose roughly 49 individuals in our imprisoned Pennsylvania. In other words, prisoners are artificially inflating the average white person's voting power and representation in their district because prisoners make white districts' total populations grow but do not affect the voter population in that district.

Implicit in that calculation is the fact that black and Latino voters live in districts that have lost more population to incarceration than they gain. Thus when we return prisoners to their pre-prison residences, the average black and Latino voter's district gains approximately 707 and 384 voters respectively.

In light of our findings, we suggest Pennsylvania count prisoners in their home communities where they reside the majority of the time. In the past few years, public policy experts working to spread public awareness have achieved some success (e.g., Prison Policy Initiative). Partly in response to such efforts, a handful of states have passed legislation requiring redistricting processes to exclude correctional populations from district population counts. However, our results indicate that this remedies only a portion of the problem. Without counting prisoners in their pre-prison districts, urban districts and non-white voters remain underrepresented. Maryland and New York recently demonstrated that it is possible to overcome this. With multi-agency collaboration and adequate resources and planning, both states counted prisoners at their pre-prison addresses and redistricted accordingly. As our research indicates, this state endeavor is critical to a representative democracy.
A Summer in Court
- by Brittany Schrader, Crim ’18

Over the summer I had the opportunity to intern with the Clerk of Courts office at Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas in Norristown, Pennsylvania. As my first internship, and more specifically, my first real-world exposure to the criminal justice system, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. After two years of courses in the Department of Sociology and Criminology I was anxious to see how all those theories, statistics, and facts that Villanova teaches would play out—and if it all really matters outside the classroom.

One of the main responsibilities of the Clerk of Courts is to keep criminal court case records. I spent some time filing court transcripts, bench warrants, parole violations, etc. The file room was bigger than I had expected; it was eye opening to see how many criminal cases occurred just in one county. Many cases involved drugs. I recalled how influential the War on Drugs was for crime and wondered how many fewer cases would exist if certain drug charges were not considered felonies.

Other duties I performed were creating spreadsheets of offenders’ fines and costs balances, performing background checks, and docketing, which is simply inputting information from paper into the online database. I also worked with the verification department, validating information in databases to make sure it was correct.

My favorite experiences occurred in the courtroom. I was able to observe many different trials, such as summary appeals which are requests to overturn a verdict from a lower level court. Many of these were traffic violations that were settled by the prosecution lowering the charge. I even had a chance to observe a murder trial. I also sat in on behavioral courts, where defendants were addicts, mentally disabled, and juveniles. The juvenile court cases were the hardest to watch. I saw children—some victims of sex trafficking, others alone because their parents are in jail often for drug charges—appear before a judge in this immense court room where multiple parties—family, lawyer, social worker—battle to determine what would be the best route.

Two high-profile cases also took place during my internship: Bill Cosby and Kathleen Kane. While it felt exciting to be present for these significant, ‘celebrity’ cases, I also saw firsthand how the media effects and influences people’s perceptions of crime. After a trial, I would read news articles that presented the cases in a distorted way and made me question whether they were in the same courtroom as myself. This reminded me of the discussion of media in one of my classes and how it influences people’s perceptions of crime; providing a real-life experience of an issue discussed in class.

The internship placed a huge emphasis on visiting other departments, such as the prothonotary (records for civil cases), archives, and recorder of deeds. Throughout the six weeks, I met lots of people—even a few judges—who were willing to talk about their careers. I now have a better understanding of the courts, specifically what goes on behind the scenes. This has had a major impact in helping me to discern what I want to do next. I would highly recommend taking advantage of the internship opportunities provided by the Department of Sociology and Criminology. An internship provides an experience that allows you to see how a subject is applied in the real world and is crucial in planning for your future.

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Get Connected...

Jump-start your search for an internship or job by attending a workshop sponsored by the Career Center!

Learn how to write a winning resume:
October 18 - 4:00 pm
October 24 - 2:30 pm

Learn how to nail the interview:
October 21 - 1:30 pm
October 27 - 3:00 pm
November 2 - 2:30 pm

All workshops take place in Room 117, Garey Hall and no registration is required.

Apply for a Vreeland-Gallagher Grant!
- $1,000 to students who work as a research assistant for a department faculty member
- $2,000 for students who pursue independent research under the mentorship of a department faculty member

Visit the Research Funding section of our website to learn more!
Farewell to Dr. Bernard Gallagher and Dr. Donna Shai who have recently retired. The Department thanks you for all of your years of service and wishes you the best of luck in your retirement!

Congratulations to Criminology major Anna DalCortivo ‘18 for being awarded a Vreeland-Gallagher Grant to conduct research with Dr. Jill McCorkel looking at the penal system in New Orleans, LA.

A New Beginning
– by Elise Alvarado, Crim ’15

It’s been a little over a year since I officially became a Villanova alumna. Post-graduation was not a walk in the park, but knowing I had a Bachelor’s degree in Criminology was enough to give me the boost of confidence I needed to make it in the real world.

I immediately started looking for jobs in New York City. Although I am originally from Tucson, Arizona and I love the west coast, there was something about the rousing city lifestyle that drew me in. To get the ball rolling I began using job hunting websites such as indeed.com and signed up for post college job subscriptions through email. This turned out to be more chaotic and stressful than I had imagined. I felt disorganized and rushed, but more importantly I was applying for jobs that were unrelated to my interests. I knew at that moment I needed to come up with a more systematized plan to help me find a job that would be the start to my career.

With no time to waste, I started to do some research on my own and came across a lot of positive feedback from college graduates who used recruiting agencies. I was able to find a legal recruiting agency located in New York and immediately submitted my resume. I made contact with a recruiter that very same day to set up an appointment. They asked me questions about my college education, my personality, and the salary I was hoping to make. After careful deliberation, my recruiter and I were able to schedule an interview for a job that was a good fit for me at Douglas and London law firm. I was later offered the position and joined the team as a Pharmaceutical Products Liability Paralegal.

I now work with a small team of attorneys to help litigate against the manufacturers of medications that have caused severe health issues to clients nationwide. Each claimant is represented through a mass tort, or a civil action involving numerous plaintiffs against one or more corporate defendants in state or federal court. The process is very similar to a class action, except that Plaintiffs file their lawsuits separately rather than in a group based on individual injury. The ultimate goal is to encourage the manufacturers to settle by taking individual cases to trial. I was recently assigned to a case focused on a Proton Pump Inhibitor, also known as PPI. The goal of this litigation is to link PPI usage to a list of specific kidney injuries that clients have seemed to develop over time.

This job has challenged me in new ways, and has forced me to expand on my medical knowledge. Not only do I learn something new every day, but I feel accomplished every time I leave the office knowing I have helped bring justice to those who have been harmed by medications. Thank you Villanova for giving me the opportunity to ignite change for people all across the country!