



## USTARS

We are making new efforts to increase the number of majors in Sociology. One challenge our students have been experiencing is combining research experience with their education. Due to limited funds, the university-wide Undergraduate Creative and Research Experience (UCARE) supports only a fraction of our students. To increase support for student research experiences and help with the cost of college, we started the USTARS program (Undergraduate Sociology Teaching and Research Students). Faculty or advanced graduate students who need support with teaching or research can invite sociology majors or minors to work with them. Students can earn income or credits through their USTARS work.



Sheila Soto



Shelby Koenig

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Or visit

<http://soc.unl.edu/sociology-stories>

(From the Chair continued...)

With new faculty hires, we have expanded our areas of emphasis to include social network analysis and broader integration of biology with sociology. In the process we have remained a collegial, collaborative department that continues to attract, mentor, and retain bright young faculty as a foundation for future growth.

Our graduate students continue to support each other through NASGS plus teaching and research seminars. They are presenting papers at conferences, publishing, engaging in research, and teaching. You will see the many undergraduate and graduate student accomplishments in the award announcements throughout.

Of course, we maintain a commitment to quality teaching. Many of our graduate student alum succeed in teaching-focused faculty positions after the intensive teaching professional development that we provide. In addition, we have several alum in research-focused positions who benefited from mentoring and professional development seminars in publishing.

As this overview and the following pages indicate, the UNL Sociology Department continues to thrive.

*-Julia McQuillan*

## Sociology Spotlight: Dead Week Dancing

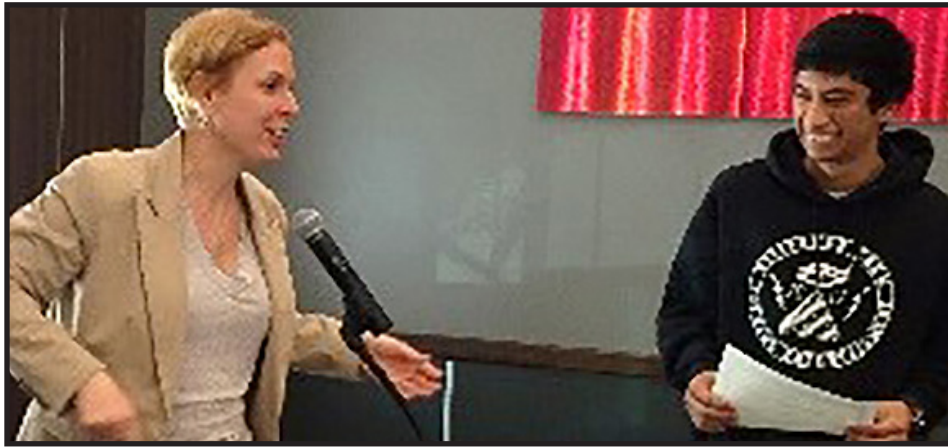


Students from Lory Dance's Sociology 101 Class dancing during "dead week" to engage students in a flash mob. Click on the picture to see all the slick dance moves or visit our website for more information.

## Undergraduate Program

The Undergraduate Committee created a new way for majors to see how choosing a coherent set of courses can lead to various career paths for students who earn their degree in Sociology.

With this new structure, Sociology in Focus, students can focus on family, health, inequality or crime while pursuing the sociology degree.



Lisa Kort-Butler presents Jorge Ledesma the first Ed A. Muñoz Award last Spring at the annual Sociology Awards Ceremony.

## Alumni Generosity Leads to Three New Awards

Each year the Department recognizes excellence among our undergraduate and graduate students. Due to the continued generosity from our donors, the Department was able to give away three new awards.

First, the Ed A. Muñoz Latina/o Excellence Award was given to Jorge Ledesma (pictured above with Kort-Butler, Undergraduate Chair).

Ledesma is a Nebraska native and college junior majoring in Sociology. Ledesma used the award to attend the American Sociological Association (ASA) annual meeting, at which he met faculty from around the country and received invitations to visit their graduate programs. "I learned a lot about the contemporary issues in Latino Sociology," he added.

Ed Munoz is an alumni of the sociology graduate program and currently works as an Associate Professor of Sociology and the Director of Ethnic Studies at the University of Utah.

Second, Rachel Schmitz is the first recipient of the Dan Hoyt Graduate Student Award for her manuscript

entitled "Homeless Young People's Experiences of Caregiver Rejection," published in the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

Rachel Schmitz was also awarded the university-wide Presidential Graduate Fellowship, which will fund her last year of graduate school focussing solely on her dissertation.

Dan Hoyt is not only a former Ph.D. student, but also former Department Chair and Associate Dean of the Arts & Sciences College. He is currently the inaugural Director of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium.

Third, Courtney Thrash received the Scott C. Whiteford Graduate Student Award. This award allowed her, in part, to work on a paper for publication with Tara Warner. She also presented her findings at a Department Colloquium. Scott Whiteford wanted to support graduate student research so students could have the same valuable experiences that he had as graduate student.

*Click on pictures to be linked to our stories.*

## DEPARTMENT AWARDS

### J.J. & Eleanor S. Ogle Fellowship

- Scott Adams
- Dane Hautala
- Laura Simon

### Cheryl Applegate Teaching Award

- Alian Kasabian

### James Reinhardt Graduate Criminology Fellowship

- Benjamin Forthun

### Nicholas Babchuk Endowment for Excellence in Research by Sociology Graduate Students

- Jacob Absalon
- Raeda Anderson
- Benjamin Forthun
- Courtney Thrash

### Alice Frost Howard Fellowship

- Jacob Absalon
- Rosalind Kichler

### Joyce O. Hertzler Sociological Research Award

- Rosalind Kichler
- Rachel Schmitz
- Elizabeth Straley

### Scott C. Whitford Graduate Student Award

- Courtney Thrash

### Dan Hoyt Graduate Student Award

- Rachel Schmitz

### Department of Sociology Research Award

- Dane Hautala

### Department of Sociology Teaching Award

- Laura Simon

## UNL Sociology Department Adds New Talent



Current 2015 Faculty pictured during the August faculty retreat: (Back row left to right) Lory Dance, Phillip Schwadel, Dan Hoyt, Kirk Dombrowski; (3rd row) David Warner, Brandon Bosch, Julia McQuillan, Tara Warner, Lisa Kort-Butler; (2nd row) Emily Kazyak, Helen Moore, Regina Werum, Jacob Cheadle; (front row) Christina Falci, Kimberly Tyler, Jolene Smyth, Jeffrey Smith, Bridget Goosby, and Kristen Olson.

**Brandon Bosch** is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Sociology and Political Science. He joined the Department in 2011. He has developed courses on mass media and political sociology, plus teaches our senior seminar course. Brandon is expanding our internships and would love to hear from Alumni about the opportunity for more. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science at University of Washington.

**Regina Werum** served as a program officer at NSF and a faculty member at Emory before coming to UNL as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. She became an active member of the Department in 2014. She fills a critical need by teaching race & ethnicity, gender, and social movement courses. She is helping NSF dissertation enhancement grants. She studies how social policy shapes and reflects social inequalities, especially in the area of education. She earned her Ph.D. at Indiana University.

**Emily Kazyak** has been an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies at the UNL since 2010. She earned a Ph.D. in Sociology and a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies at the University of Michigan.

Her teaching focuses on sexuality, gender, and theory. Her research focuses on how cultural and legal contexts shape identities and family lives. She has published in journals such as the *Journal of Family Issues* and *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

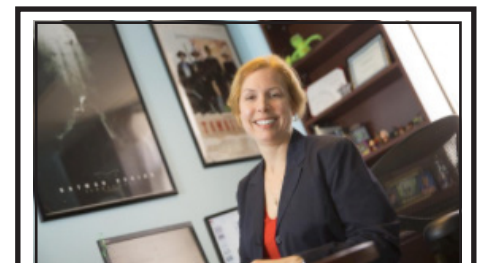
Through a search for an assistant professor with an emphasis on social networks, we hired **Jeffery Smith**. After earning his bachelor's degree, Jeff worked for a year at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This experience helped him decide to return to Graduate School in Sociology. He earned his Ph.D. at Duke University and joined the Department in Fall of 2013. He teaches methods and theory courses. Smith has already published several articles with an emphasis on social networks and demography in journals such as the *American Sociological Review* and *Sociological Methodology*.

**Kirk Dombrowski** joined the Department as a Full Professor in 2013. His background is in Anthropology, yet his expertise in applying social network analyses to health questions helped him to easily fit into the Sociology Department. Kirk is the Director of the university-wide Minority Health Dispari-

ties Initiative (MHDI). He also founded the REACH Lab to house the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral researchers working on his projects. He has a strong grant and publishing record.

**David Warner** has been an Assistant Professor since 2012. He earned a Ph.D. in sociology and demography from Pennsylvania State University, was a post-doc in Demography of Aging and the Life Course the Carolina Population Center at the The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He teaches marriage and family and methodology courses. He studies health, stratification, and families. He has published in journals such as *Social Forces* and the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.

**Tara Warner** started as an Assistant Professor in 2012 after earning her Ph.D. from Bowling Green State University. She teaches crime and methods courses. She studies how human development, health, and well-being unfold in, and are affected by, the various contexts in which individuals are embedded across the life course. She has published in journals such as *Social Forces* and *Journal of Family Violence*.

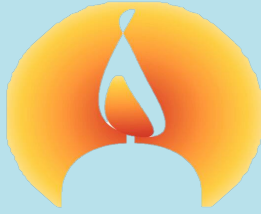


Lisa Kort-Butler was featured in the news for her study on the links between kid's health problems and increased risk of delinquency. Lisa's research on prison volunteers was also featured in the news.

*Click on her photo to see her story.*

## In Memoriam

Remembering Three Professors



### Peter Beeson

Peter Gaither Beeson, 69, of Lincoln, passed away February 16, 2015. In 2002, at the very young age of 57, Pete was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

Among other things, He turned to poetry to capture the final chapters in his journey.

### Jerry S. Cloyd

Professor Cloyd was an integral part of the Sociology Department at UNL for over four decades. He was born in Meadow Grove, Nebraska, and briefly attended the University of Nebraska before being inducted into the army during World War II. Jerry was part of many graduate committees and was a hard-working colleague and teacher, a role he enjoyed greatly. He will be sorely missed after his long and fulfilling life.

### Jack Siegman

Jack Siegman passed away on April 21, 2015 in Laguna Beach, California. He was a faculty member at UNL from 1966 and retired as full professor in 2001. Jack's leadership roles took many forms. He was elected to serve as Chair of the Department of Sociology from 1980 to 1983 and served on many other committees around campus.

To read full Memorials, please visit: <http://soc.unl.edu/>

# Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR)

We further our contributions to research excellence through investments in the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR). The Bureau was established using department resources in 1964 to facilitate faculty research through data collection and related research methodology needs. The Bureau has grown over the years to not only support research grants and projects of Sociology faculty, but also to conduct research for other UNL investigators and contract research for the state of Nebraska, other universities, and private organizations.

Jolene Smyth, Director of BOSR, brought her considerable survey research expertise (e.g. co-authoring the Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: the Tailored Design Method) to BOSR. She has

also conducted experiments and studies that have led to publications.

Through her teaching and research, Jolene has been able to connect students interested in research methods to BOSR through student internships, collaborations, and employment. These ties are also enhancing the quality of research service that the Bureau provides. She has also supported BOSR staff's involvement in regional and national conferences and organizations.

In effect, this department-based unit serves functions similar to those found in social science research centers at other universities. The BOSR has so much going on that they do their own newsletter now. Get on their mailing list at <http://bosr.unl.edu/>.



## Around the Department



Patricia Wonch Hill leads the "Social Club," educating middle school youth about Sociology.

Her work was also featured on the UNL news page. Her work focuses on adoption as a last option for people seeking parenthood.

Bridget Goosby gave a talk at the Malone Community Center as part of their conversation series on Discrimination, Racism & Health Inequalities. The event was cosponsored by the UNL Minority Health Disparities Initiative. Click on her photo to watch the talk on YouTube.



## Congratulations Recent M.A. & Ph.D. Graduates

**Elizabeth Richardson, M.A.** “Is Gaining, Losing or Keeping a Self-Identified Fertility Problem Associated with Changes in Self-Esteem?”

**Katherine Bass, Ph.D.** “Rape Culture and Sexual Slang: A Structured Action Approach”

**Deadric T. Williams, Ph.D.** “Three Essays on Inequality, Stress, and Dyadic Functioning as a Longitudinal and Reciprocal Process”

**Courtney Thrash, M.A.** “A Model for Understanding Structure versus Agency in the Participation of Minors in the Commercial Sex Market.”

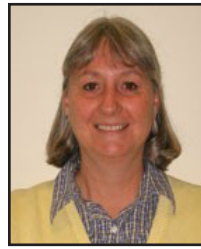
**Megumi Watanabe, Ph.D.** “Faculty Parental Status: An Investigation of Network Homophily, Marginalization, and Supportive Work-Family Academic Culture.”

**Alian Kasabian, Ph.D.** “Capturing the Gendiverse: A Test of the Gender Self-Perception Scale, with Implications for Survey Data and Labor Market Measures”



Deadric Williams and Jacob Cheadle at Williams' Doctoral Defense.

## Carla B. Howery Award for Developing Teacher Scholars



Helen Moore has been recognized through the years for excellence and leadership in teaching. This year, at the section on Teaching and Learning at the ASA Annual Meetings, Helen was awarded the Carla B. Howery Award for contributions to scholar teachers. She was the editor of the ASA journal, *Teaching Sociology*, from 1999 to 2004, publishing several articles with graduate students on the experiences of “diverse” instructors

teaching “diversity” courses.

During her career, Helen has received the University of Nebraska's highest teaching award, the Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award, and, most recently, was named an inaugural Aaron Douglas Professor. This Professorship is awarded to full professors who demonstrate sustained and extraordinary levels of teaching excellence and national activities and/or practice.

Helen will retire in May 2016 after a distinguished career at UNL that started in 1979.

## UNL Ph.D. Sociology Program Rises in National Rankings

In Fall 2014, we finished our Academic Program Review (APR), and in the Spring of 2015, gained insights from the external review team.

Some highlights from the academic program review provide a vision of our strengths. Academic Analytics is a service that summarizes research productivity for all academic departments, thus providing comparisons. Since 2007 our national ranking among Ph.D. Sociology programs in the U.S. has risen from 65<sup>th</sup> (46.7 percentile) in 2009 to 47<sup>th</sup> (62.6 percentile) in 2010, to 26<sup>th</sup> (87.0 percentile) in 2011, and to 13<sup>th</sup> (90.5 percentile) spot. These numbers represent a steady incremental increase in our national standing.

Our rise in national prominence can be attributed, in large part, to the professional growth of a cad-

re of early career faculty who, over the last 5 years, have become tenured, mid-career scholars. Cheadle, Dance, Falci, Goosby, Kort-Butler, Olson, Schwadel, and Smyth now represent a cohort of teacher/scholars with strong research agendas and growing national reputations.

Our rise in national rank has also occurred during a time of considerable change in the Department, and within UNL as a whole. Our entry into the Big Ten/CIC and the retirement of a number of senior, core department members could have stalled the growth process.

The remaining senior department members (Hoyt, McQuillan, Moore, and Tyler), however, ensured that these moments of change became opportunities for growth and redefinition.

*Click on pictures to be linked to our stories.*



Pictured above UNL Sociology alumni who are now faculty at Nebraska Institutions: Kari Gentzler, Todd Green, Danelle DeBoer, Monica Snowden, Joan Gilbraith, and Susan Wortman.

## Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Society (NUSS)

We hosted the 2014 Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Symposium (NUSS) in November. Over 100 sociology students and faculty from colleges and universities around Nebraska came to campus.

Students presented papers and engaged in roundtable discussions about their research or theoretical work. Students also participated in

panel presentations about their internship experiences. Participants had the opportunity to hear about the ins-and-outs of graduate school from Dr. Christina Falci and current graduate students.

The topics for that year's presentations included student research about the college experience; gender and sexuality; race, ethnicity, and identity; and issues surrounding mental and physical health, and an interactive session on the Inside Out program, with Tecumseh State Correctional Institution. The session was facilitated by faculty and students from Peru State and an Inside Out graduate.

Kirk Dombrowski gave the keynote address entitled, "Finding and Understanding Social Boundaries within an Arctic Community." NUSS was an outstanding opportunity for UNL students to see sociology in action, and for students from around the state to consider a graduate education at UNL.

### UNL Alum Seeks Equal Access to Healthcare

Christina Ngaruiya, Sociology undergraduate alumni, featured in the Alumni magazine.

<http://soc.unl.edu/alum-christine-ngaruiya>



## Faculty in the News



Philip Schwadel's work on Religiosity and Education was featured in the news.

Only half of Black youth are confident of living to age 35, says a new study by Professor Tara Warner, laying bare the toll of the racial divide in the United States.



Kimbery Tyler co-leads UNL's Social and Behavioral Sciences initiative.

Her research is on a new use of technology for studying substance use among young adults who are homeless.

Kristen Olson was elected as a Committee member to AAPOR (American Association for



Public Opinion Research) and serves on various committees. AAPOR is the leading association of public opinion and survey research professionals. Olson's term expires May 2016.

*Click on pictures to be linked to their stories.*

# SOCI SPOTLIGHT

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Sociology Newsletter

711 Oldfather Hall  
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UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln

## Our History is Reaching into the Future

### Follow Us

We are proud of our 100+ years as a thriving Sociology Department.

This newsletter provides brief highlights of recent successes and changes in the Department. We hope that you will want to hear more about our activities in real time. Please follow us on Twitter, check our Facebook page (both have the handle UNLSOC), and explore our webpage at <http://soc.unl.edu/>. You will learn some of the stories behind the pictures in this issue.

### How to Provide Support

How can we do so much? We have help. For example: Scott Whiteford wanted to support graduate student research so that they could have the valuable experiences that he had, so now the Department is able to give the Scott C. Whiteford Award.

Dan Hoyt has started the Opportunity Scholarship to support a first

generation undergraduate student and the Dan Hoyt Graduate Student Award.

Alum Ed Muñoz supported a sociology student's attendance to the annual ASA meeting through his new award, the Ed A. Muñoz Latina/o Sociology Excellence Award.

John G. Bruhn provided the funds for a professorship that supported the work of Les Whitback and now furthers the efforts of Kirk Dombrowski.

You can provide for the Department by contributing to our general fund. This fund supports creative activities to enhance our mission – e.g. supporting our middle school “Social Club” to help youth do sociology, or the new Undergraduate Sociology Teaching and Research Students (USTARS) initiative.

A gift to this fund would help support the many activities of the

Sociology Department including department colloquiums, guest lecturers, student scholarships, and research support. Click on the “N” to give now or visit [NUFoundation.org](http://NUFoundation.org).



### Contact Us

We want to hear from you. What more can we do? Do you have internship ideas, collaboration possibilities, or ways that the Undergraduate Sociology Association students can provide services or benefit from your experience and expertise? Let us know! Just email: [sociology@unl.edu](mailto:sociology@unl.edu).