A Word from our Chair

Several readers of our first newsletter have asked how we arrived at the name, *The Promise*. We borrowed that expression from the classic book, *The Sociological Imagination*, published by a very famous sociologist from the 1950s, Dr. C. Wright Mills. Dr. Mills used those words to explain how sociology “promised” a way to better understand the connections between personal biography and history on the one hand and personal troubles and public issues on the other. As Dr. Chad Smith, who first suggested the name, put it, “Since it is a foundational document for sociological understanding, it serves as a nice name for our newsletter and our promise to be a student-centered department that attempts to maintain quality relationships with our current and former students and our commitment to high quality research on sociological issues relevant to contemporary society.”

In the second edition of *The Promise*, we focus on our newest and already highly successful program: The M.S. Program in Dementia and Aging Studies. We also highlight two of our most creative and active faculty members, Drs. Toni Watt and Bob Price. We conclude by celebrating the accomplishments of a large number of our graduate and undergraduate alumni, who serve as a testament to the value of our promise to them.

Dr. Susan Day, Chair
Department of Sociology
Texas State University

Dr. G. Allen Power presents University Lecture on Dementia

Dr. G. Allen Power, internationally renowned expert on dementia care, delivered a University Lecture on “Facing the Future: Revolutionizing the Care of Persons with Dementia.” This lecture, presented on October 31, 2014 in the Wittliff Collections, highlighted our new, interdisciplinary degree program: M.S. in Dementia and Aging Studies (MSDA). Pictured are Dr. Chris Johnson, Dr. Power, and Dr. Kyong Hee Chee. Drs. Johnson and Chee served as organizers for the daylong event that included a workshop and welcome breakfast with MSDA and Sociology faculty. The MSDA is a 33-hour online degree, incorporating courses from Sociology, Long Term Care, Social Work, and Communication Disorders. For further information on the MSDA program, contact Dr. Patti Giuffre, Director of Graduate Studies, at pg07@txstate.edu.
Spotlight on… Dr. Toni Watt

Dr. Toni Watt is a bit of a paradox of a professor. She is one of the busiest and most productive faculty members in our department and, yet, she also projects one of the friendliest and most helpful personalities on fourth floor. She teaches our required courses in quantitative research methods, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, but she also practices what she preaches. Dr. Watt is a model of the applied sociologist and has contributed immensely to this departmental specialty. For this reason, she has been appointed as Faculty Associate for the Center for Social Inquiry. Dr. Watt’s research focuses on the treatment and prevention of mental health problems in children and adolescents, by means of an emphasis on innovative, integrated health care. With funding from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, the Hogg Foundation, and the George Foundation, Dr. Watt is the principal investigator on several projects designed to improve this care. Dr. Watt is also working with People’s Community Clinic to evaluate a pilot nutrition intervention for low-income Hispanic pregnant women. She serves as an evaluator and mentor for the FACES program (Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success) at Texas State, a collaborative effort with the School of Social Work (Dr. Christine Norton), Office of Retention (Naomi Valdez), Courtney Jones (a FACES advocate and foster care alumni), and a large array of university volunteers who offer a system of support for Texas State students who have aged out of the foster care system. Dr. Watt, Dr. Norton, and Ms. Jones recently published their research on FACES in the journal of Children and Youth Services Review. For additional information on Dr. Watt’s work, please contact her at: tw15@txstate.edu.

Spotlight on… Dr. Bob Price

An expert in business management once observed that a person’s office is a reflection of their personality. Among academics, an office can also reflect one’s teaching style. A great example of this truism is our own Dr. Bob Price. He has assembled perhaps the most aesthetically pleasing office in our new UAC building. Dr. Price’s workspace is very neat and orderly, as is his thinking in class on topics ranging from technological advancements over time to gentrification in American cities. Yet, when students and colleagues enter his scholarly domain, their attention is immediately drawn to the objects populating the office: prints on the wall of ancient subway systems, flat wiring diagrams and NASA missions throughout the solar system; an old typewriter in back--no, students, that is not a broken computer without a monitor!–and an actual slide rule. One learns things simply being in Dr. Price’s space. Put differently, Dr. Price’s gift to the department is that he teaches, and his students learn, many different ways. He is constantly enriching his courses with new topics and timely discussions, as he recently did by reading Capital in the Twenty-First Century, written by renowned economist Thomas Piketty, with his graduate students in the seminar in political sociology. On the other side of the world, Dr. Price organized and taught our very first summer abroad program, as he accompanied his students to Canterbury, England in 2013 to study urban sociology and the history of statistics. On a more regular basis, Dr. Price sponsors our Sociology Club that encourages student to experience sociology through film criticism and performances in the classroom, and the Texas State University chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta, the sociology honor society. Above all, Dr. Price makes sure that sociology remains fun for all, through activities such as the Sociology Club’s annual Halloween kickball game. (In the photo on the left, Dr. Price is the person dressed as a teacher!)
Sociology Graduate Student Alumni


Christian Bolden (MA 2005) received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Central Florida, and is now Assistant professor of Criminal Justice at Loyola University-New Orleans. Dr. Bolden’s most recent publication is “Tales from the Hood: An Emic Perspective on Gang Joining and Gang Desistance” in Criminal Justice Review (2013).

Courtney Caviness (MA 2013) is Graduate Assistant in the Doctoral Program in Sociology at the University at California-Davis. She was named the Outstanding Graduate Student in Sociology and received the Women and Gender Studies Student Scholar Award in 2013. Courtney is co-author, with Dr. Patti Giuffre, of the forthcoming “Desevolutionization” in the Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies. She presented her thesis, “Performing Laughs, Performing Gender: The Use of Humor in Constructing Identities Among Stand-up Comics,” at the Sociologists for Women in Society Summer Meeting in New York in 2014.

Amber Deane (MA 2005) received her Ph.D. from Texas Women’s University in 2010. She is Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and Sociology at Albany State University. Dr. Deane received a research grant from Morehouse State University, School of Medicine, in 2014 to study emotional literacy.


Nicole Farris (MA 2008) received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, and is now Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of West Alabama. She co-edited, with Dudley L. Poston, Jr. and Wen Shan Yang, The Family and Social Change in Chinese Societies New York, Springer (2013). Dr. Farris also co-authored, with Lei He, “Sexuality in China” in the International Handbook of Sexuality, Springer Publishing Company (2013).

Dorian Galindo (MS 2012) is Research Analyst for the Department of Research and Information Technologies, North East Independent School District, San Antonio, TX. She is also working on her Ph.D. in Applied Demography at UT-San Antonio.

Lindsey Halligan (MS 2012) is Program Specialist for the Texas Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services.

Jeanne Heinen (MS 2014) presented a scholarly paper on “Gendered Illness: A Content Analysis of Films Depicting Mental Illness” at the Women and Gender Research Collective Symposium on Exploring Gender, Mental Health, and Wellness at Texas State University in 2014.


Ricardo Lowe, Jr. (MS 2014) is a Statistician for USDA-NASS in Austin TX. He received a Summer Incentive Scholarships from the Graduate College in 2014. Ricardo presented a scholarly paper, “How Empowering Women in Colon, Panama, Improves the City Economy,” at the Women and Gender Research Collective Symposium on Exploring Gender, Mental Health, and Wellness at Texas State University in 2014. He also presented a scholarly paper, with Dr. Audwin Anderson and Dr. Emily Summers, “Developing an Instrument for Longitudinally Analyzing Cultural Competence Amongst First Time in College Students,” at the Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference in Fort Worth TX in 2014.

Carlton Mathis (MS 2008) received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Texas A&M University in 2012, and is now an assistant professor at Kent State University. Dr. Mathis co-authored, with Tony P. Love, “Control Balance Theory as a Predictor of Delinquency and Victimization at Two Early Stages in the Life Course” in International Journal of Crime, Criminal Justice and Criminal Law (2015).

Jennifer McCleary (MS 2012) works for the Travis County District Attorney in the Strategic Resources Division.

Daniel Auya Nyachumba (MS 2014) received a Sociology Department Geoff Memorial Scholarship in 2013, and a Graduate College Scholarship in 2014. Daniel also received a Thesis Research Grant from the Center for Social Inquiry in 2014 to study the medicalization of inattention and hyperactivity in Kenya.

Staci Osterkamp (MA 2007) is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at UT-San Antonio.
Colin Pierson (MA 2013) is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at Texas State University. He was appointed Faculty Associate for the Center for Social Inquiry.

Kelley Russell-Duvarney (MA 2013) presented “Globalizations, Transnational Feminisms and Undoing Gender: The Case Study of an All-female Fair Trade Cooperative” at the Southwestern Sociological Association meetings in San Antonio TX in 2014.

Chris Scales (MS 2014) is a Claims Examiner for the Texas Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services.

Meredith Sexton (MS 2009) is an elementary school teacher in Houston TX.

Jesse Simmons (MS 2007) is Operations Manager at the St. David's Foundation Dental Program.

Christina Thomas (MS 2011) is in the Sociology Doctoral Program at Texas Women’s University.

Bricio Vasquez (MA 2008) is Data Director for the P16Plus Council of Greater Bexar County. He is also pursuing a Ph.D. in Applied Demography at the University of Texas-San Antonio.

Chandra Ward (MA 2005) is working on her dissertation in Sociology at Georgia State University. She is an instructor at Kennesaw State University, and has authored several articles, the most recent of which is “A Tale of Two Legacies: The 1996 Summer Olympics Legacy 16 Years Later” in Contexts (2013).

Maria Wasley (MA 2013) is Research Associate for the Prospect Research and Management-VPUA at Texas State University. Maria presented “Sexual Ad-Lib?: Sexual Scripts and the Negotiation of Sexual Boundaries When Women Have Sex with Women,” at the Sociologists for Women in Society Summer Meeting, New York in 2013.


Undergraduate Alumni

Misty Deitz (BSAS 2012) is Case Manager/House Manager for Optimum Residential Services in Austin TX.


Sarah Esquivel (BSAS 2012) is working on her Masters in Social Work at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

Paul Kappler (BS 2104) is Graduate Assistant in Sociology at Texas State University. He received a Geoff Wood Memorial Scholarship, Graduate College Scholarship, and Texas State Graduate Merit Fellowship.

Sydne Kicpepies (BS 2012) is Sales Associate for The Heyl Group at Keller Williams Real Estate in Austin TX.

Kami Rutherford (BS, 2014) is Graduate Assistant in Sociology at Texas State University. Kami received the Sociology Department Herman Sprit Award, Sociology Department Geoff Wood Memorial Scholarship, Bobcat Pride Scholarship, Texas State Graduate Merit Fellowship, and Bobcat Pride Leadership Development Scholarship.

Jessica Saenz (BS 2013) is Concierge at The Adante-Sagora Senior Living Center in San Antonio TX.

Rhonda (Adams) Smith (BA 2009) is Director of Aging at Kerr Tar Regional Council of Governments in Clinton NC.

Catrina Stevens (BS 2011) is Administrative Coordinator at the University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston.

Alexandra Warner (BA 2014) is Graduate Assistant in the Doctoral Program in Sociology at the University of Central Florida. She presented “For Honor and Country: Understanding the Link Between Football Hooliganism and Nationalism” at the Southwestern Sociological Association meetings in San Antonio TX in 2014. She also published her paper in the academic journal, Texas State Undergraduate Research Journal (2014).

April Hudson (BA 2014) is currently working on her MA. She presented “Navigating Stereotypes Among Women Motorcycle Riders” at the American Sociological Association meetings in San Francisco CA in 2014, and was awarded the Sociology Graduate Program Award for Outstanding Contribution and a Graduate College Scholarship in 2014.

Cheryl Rollman-Tinajero (BA 2014) is currently working on her MA. She presented, with Ms. Gayle Bouzard, “Processes That Shape Heterosexual Women’s Sexual Identity,” at the Society for the Study of Social Problems meetings in San Francisco CA in 2014.

Alums… Give us a holler!
Please send us information on your career and family/personal life, and memories of your experiences in Sociology at Texas State University. We will share them with the Sociology Family in the next issue of The Promise. Contact: Ms. Lillian Dees ld01@txstate.edu or (512) 245-2113.