Some of us have always known what we “wanted to be when we grew up,” but some of us haven’t. In grad school we all feel the implicit push towards academic jobs post-graduation. However, some of us are considering (or have always wanted) non-academic jobs. A challenge for some of us is knowing what a non-academic job “looks like.” The MSU Graduate School puts on a couple of workshops a year that discuss this, and those have been very helpful and encouraging, but one of the things they talk about is utilizing alumni networks. However, our alumni networks are generally limited to those who have finished while we have been in grad school, former students of our professors, and those that we meet at academic conferences. This tends to leave out alums who are working in non-academic settings, but we know you are out there, and we would like to hear from you! What are you doing now? How have you taken what you learned in grad school to other settings? To help facilitate this we invite all department graduate alumni to connect with us on LinkedIn and we have set up an alumni group called MSU Sociology Graduate Alumni to facilitate interaction and connections among all alumni. You can also contact us directly if you prefer at rchdenny@msu.edu and mindessa@msu.edu.

Riva Denny and Sam Mindes
Once again, we are pleased to share with you some of the latest happenings in the Department of Sociology and news about some of those who have been part of our Department’s history. We hope more of you will share with us your stories of success so that we may share them via this newsletter. Please send me your news at jussaume@msu.edu, and we will get your announcements into the next edition of our newsletter. We also encourage you to visit our website at sociology.msu.edu to learn more about what is happening in MSU Sociology.

One of the Department’s more exciting initiatives is the expansion of experiential learning opportunities for our undergraduate students, as well as more information on professional opportunities both within and outside of academia for our graduate students. We are especially grateful for Dr. William Form’s recent contribution of $5,000 towards our undergraduate endowment. We still have a long ways to go, but all contributions will help us do more for our students!

Please read the contributions in this newsletter from our undergraduate and graduate students and do take the time to communicate with them directly. Our students often ask how they can communicate with our alums because students value your input on how to prepare themselves for their lives after MSU. In this era when our students face many challenges, it would be beneficial for them to hear about your experiences and knowledge.

Raymond Jussaume
Professor and Chair

Dr. Khalida Zaki served the Department of Sociology for more than twenty years as an Instructor of Sociology and Undergraduate Program Director. Dr. Zaki’s teaching and research included Integrative Studies in Social Sciences focusing on International Development and Change; Social, Cultural and Demographic Perspectives on South Asia; the global context of Islam & gender; Women’s status and family planning in Pakistan; Pakistani-Americans; Muslim Immigrants health; and Youth and Schools. She was honored with the MSU All-University Faculty - Excellence in Diversity Award in 2003.

Dr. Vladimir Shlapentokh published more than 30 books and dozens of professional articles about Soviet and contemporary Russian issues. His research interests include: the segmented approach in the analysis of society; the role of the feudal model for understanding contemporary societies; the nature of totalitarian society; the interaction between ideology and public opinion; and the role that fear plays in the advancement of order in society.
In Memory

Dr. Julius Rivera, who earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from Michigan State University, passed away on February 19th, 2014. He taught at Texas Tech University, the University of Arizona, and the University of Houston. He was Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is well known for his book “Latin America: A Sociocultural Interpretation,” and was actively involved with UTEP’s Center for Lifelong Learning (juliusrivera.com).

UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Hello! My name is Hollis Henry. I graduated from Michigan State with a BS in Sociology in 2014. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate to be involved in the department on several committees, work on a research project with a professor, and serve two years as the President of the Undergraduate Sociology Association. After graduation I worked for a year and half in the Office of Survey Research. In April, I moved to St. Paul, MN, to work as a research assistant for Wilder Research. In my new position I’m responsible for assisting research scientists with data collection, including key-informant interviewing, qualitative data coding, survey questionnaire design, and web survey programming.

MSU has so many great teachers and resources. I encourage students to build relationships with professors; one never knows what doors they can open. Volunteering and serving the local community directly helps student get firsthand experience they can’t find in a classroom. The last thing I would recommend to current students is to take more math!

PH.D. ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Carmen Bain, PhD, graduated in 2007 from MSU and is currently Associate Professor in Sociology at Iowa State University. Dr. Bain’s research interests include the political economy of food and agricultural systems, gender, agriculture and international development. Dr. Bain loved her time at MSU and encourages graduate students to get involved in faculty research projects to gain practical experience. “I was fortunate to have a really great mentor at MSU, Dr. Larry Busch, who expected his graduate students to collaborate on his research grants, co-author publications, and present at professional meetings. This experience was invaluable in helping me prepare for a career as a sociology professor.” Dr. Bain also encourages graduate students to build relationships among each other. “I developed a great network of friends among my fellow graduate students and it’s wonderful to continue to work together and collaborate.”
USA PRESIDENT

This past October, the Undergraduate Sociological Association attended the annual Michigan Sociological Association conference that was held at Muskegon Community College. Next, a group of us attended the TEDxMSU event in March. The event was inspiring, as it focused on the “idea of willpower and the mental and physical processes by which brilliant ideas make it out of brain-space and mere musings...and into the real world.” On April 18th, we participated in the Spartan Day of Service. We helped clean up the Lilac Garden in East Lansing.

With several of our USA members graduating, there is the unease at what to expect in the job market this year. Communication between the Sociology Department’s undergraduates and recent alumni is imperative in helping students feel comfortable with entering this job market. If you would like to help by communicating with current undergraduate Sociology majors at MSU, possibly through a Skype conference or an in-person talk, please send an email to me at groeller@msu.edu, or contact our Department Chair, Ray Jussaume, at jussaume@msu.edu.

Katrina Groeller

NEW FACES

Roseann Bills is the Department’s new Graduate Secretary. Roseann has worked on campus for nearly 10 years with most of that time spent as a graduate secretary. Previous to MSU, Roseann owned a plastics recycling business that recycles #2 HDPE plastic from around Michigan and surrounding states. Roseann especially enjoys working with the graduate students to help them reach their goals.

Roseann Bills

Dr. Jennifer Carrera

The Department of Sociology is happy to welcome Assistant Professor Jennifer Carrera to the faculty. Dr. Carrera recently completed her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Illinois where she also completed an M.S. in Environmental Engineering. Dr. Carrera has a previous M.S. in Biostatistics from Emory University. Her doctoral dissertation focused on water and sanitation struggles in Detroit, MI and Lowndes County, AL. Dr. Carrera’s future work will explore the health impacts of impaired water and sanitation access among low income populations in economically developed settings.

Dr. Jennifer Carrera

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
Associate Professor **Stephanie Nawyn**’s expertise is in gender and migration, focusing on forced migration and the ways that structural inequalities inhibit immigrant incorporation. Her work has focused on refugee resettlement and the economic advancement of African migrants in the U.S. Dr. Nawyn also has begun a study of human trafficking in Turkey, and was a Fulbright Fellow at Istanbul University during the 2013-14 academic year. Dr. Nawyn has consulted to refugee resettlement organizations in the United States and Turkey, and has contributed to the U.S. Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Report.

Associate Professor **Hui (Cathy) Liu**’s research interests include population health and mortality, family and marriage, bio-demography of aging and the life course, LGBT population, sexuality, and quantitative methodology. Dr. Liu is a current recipient of an NIH Career Award (Mentored Research Scientist Development Award). She was the 2013 winner of the Outstanding Professional Paper Award from the National Council on Family Relations. Dr. Liu’s research has been widely reported in prominent news outlets including the New York Times, the Washington Post, ABC News, and CBS News.

Associate Professor **Stephen Gasteyer**’s research examines the nexus of community development processes, food, water, and public health. He is examining how development processes are implemented in the Middle East (Palestine-Israel), and the United States (specifically in the Great Plains and Michigan). His work addresses environmental equity and justice and the processes that have systematically disenfranchised indigenous peoples. Next year, Dr. Gasteyer will be on a Fulbright Fellowship in the Palestinian territories, where he will be looking at adaptive management and the land-water-food-energy-climate nexus.