

# Department of Sociology & Corrections



Dr. Luis Posas

## A Note from the Chair...

### Fall 2019 Issue

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During the academic year of 2018-2019 we conducted a formal process of review of the Department and Programs and learned a lot from this experience. We started the process long before with the accumulation of data, then we created a self-study report followed by a visit of two external program reviewers who issued a report at the end of spring 2019. The process is nearing completion pending only a document of departmental response to the external reviewer’s recommendations and the elaboration of program specific strategic plans. We look forward to the consideration and implementation of the recommendations from the external reviewers particularly those that address departmental curricular integration, internal identity and streamlining of our undergraduate and graduate programs.

In the meantime, I would like to report the opening of two important programs. The Criminal Justice Program was approved at the end of the last academic cycle and it already shows great promise during the first year of its implementation with 127 students who have declared the major. This program is administered through the Department of Government as a joint effort between Corrections and Law Enforcement in which fifty percent of the course work comes from each of these programs. We are encouraged about the great response from students and will soon engage in talks about the creation of a graduate version of the program. The Applied Organizational Studies program not only changed its title to Applied Leadership, but it also opened a pilot program to offer the first all-online program in our College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The Applied Leadership program recently registered a milestone of one hundred students in the major. We are encouraged by the immediate success of these two programs and look forward to their sustainability in the years to come.

In all our programs, we continue to offer opportunities to maintain our students engaged in their respective fields of study. This issue of the newsletter includes reports from students about how their programs keep them engaged. The section of awards also demonstrates recognition to our students through scholarships and award to a faculty advisor. Congratulations to Dr. Sarah Epplen for the well-executed program for the conference of the Sociologists of Minnesota (SOM) in our campus on October 10th and 11th. The events of the Social Justice Lecture Series continue to be important venues to involve students and faculty and this year it coordinated at least one of the presentations with the SOM conference. Several students attended the conference of the Minnesota Corrections Association, the Midwest Sociological Association Meetings and others. Finally, we offer our words of thanks to the many practicing professionals who delivered invited talks in many of the courses across our programs this year.

Many thanks to Mr. AbdulRahmane Abdul-Aziz and Ms. Anfa Diiriye for their collaboration obtaining the contributions that appear in this newsletter. Their work and dedication is greatly appreciated.

# Big ideas. Real-world thinking.



# FACULTY RECOGNITION



## Dr. Emily Boyd,

Recipient of the 2019 Faculty Advisor Award from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. In the picture Dr. Boyd is accompanied by Dr. Matthew Loayza Dean of the College.

Every year the SBS Advising Center asks students to nominate advisors that have impacted their academic journey. According to the specialists at the Advising Center, the award is extended to advisors like Dr. Boyd for their support mentoring and guiding students or just listening about their goals or plans for the future. Dr. Boyd helps make this a welcoming place for students by being approachable, accessible and friendly. An excerpt of the nominating letter states that: *Dr. Boyd is superb at assisting students. Before Mavconnect was in use, she utilized an online appointment booking system to make connecting with students easier. She has met with me*

*numerous times over the past semesters and I feel that she has truly listened to my concerns and questions. When unsure of something, she has helped point me in the right direction, especially in my quest for graduate school. Dr. Boyd helped lift some of the stress off my shoulders so I could better focus on my studies and not be so concerned with all the little details.*

# STUDENT RECOGNITION

## Scholarship Awards

On October 29, 2019, The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences celebrated a Scholarship and Award Dinner to honor scholarship recipients and donors. We are delighted to have students receiving scholarships thanks to generous contributions of several donors.



## Rachel Steinbauer

Recipient of the Boyd Duncan, Gustav Petersen, T.R. Schaffler Scholarship

## Shayla Schumacher

Recipient of the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Nonprofit Leadership Scholarship

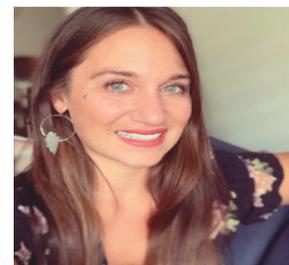
From Right to Left: Dr. Kristi Rendahl, Director of the Nonprofit Leadership Program, Shayla Schumacher, Rachel Steinbauer and Dr. Luis Posas, Department Chair



## Cassandra Hanson

Recipient of the Joseph Becker Memorial Scholarship.

From Right to Left: Patricia Neubert, Micaiah Becker, Cassandra Hanson and David Neubert.



## Nicole Glasnapp

Recipient of the Rose M. Hull Aging Studies Scholarship

From Right to Left: Robert Chesley, Nicole Glasnapp and Carla Chesley

## Marisa Hansen

Recipient of The David and Darlene Janovy Summer Award for Research on Aging.



# STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

## Nonprofit Leadership Program Students



### Ameen Hassan

I chose to pursue a non-profit leadership certificate because I always knew I would work in the non-profit sector after graduation. The program focuses on the leadership component and encourages students to do so by doing internships and service-learning projects. The courses in the program helped me grow my leadership skills and gave me a well-

rounded understanding of how non-profits operate. During my time in the program, I worked as an intern for the American Red Cross, Minnesota Historical Society, and South-Central Housing Authority. I also volunteered locally with Lifeworks and served as a disaster volunteer in Puerto Rico during Hurricane Maria.

### Siddhi Bhakta

I started my journey in the Nonprofit Leadership program because of the passion I have for working with organizations that strive to make a difference in many lives. There are so many experiences that I had in this program that have left a big impact on me. For example, in my Research and Action class with Laura Harrison my peers and I got the opportunity to plan a silent protest supporting DACA students on our campus. We were a group of four students who brought together around 30 people to do a die in at the food court in the Centennial Student Union and then sent over 100+ letters to the senate about keeping DACA students safe. Seeing the abundance of support on campus was a thrilling and fulfilling experience for me.

Another experience that I had was my internship with the Southern Minnesota Crisis Nursery. If it weren't for this internship, I would not have realized what I wanted to do after graduation. My mentors Evan Curtin and Erin Miller helped me grow my skills and pushed me to get out of my comfort zone. I was able to help with intakes, childcare, fundraising, administrative help, and so much more. My time at the crisis nursery will be something I remember forever to remind myself why I am going onto the career path that I will be after graduation.

## Sociology Program Students



### Samuel Orinstien

The research I presented at MSS was part of a larger research project examining food insecurity among students at our University. The research was conducted in the Spring of 2018 in the class Sociology in Action. I was one of two grad students in the class, so I

was the head of the interview team. The bulk of my presentation was on those qualitative findings. It felt good to be presenting alongside other academics who have done similar research, and the Q&A was the most enjoyable part of presenting for me. The conference was a good time as well. The plenary speakers were fantastic, especially Gary Alan Fine's talk on guiding young symbolic interactionists. Chicago was fun too; a relatively short drive, good food, good beer. Overall it was a positive experience that I was thankful to be a part of.

Samuel Orinstien also presented *Examining Table Service Through a Symbolic Interactionist Lens* at the conference of the Sociologists of Minnesota.



### Hashem Alrefai

At MSS I presented my paper on Saudi Islamic Social Movements During the Arab Spring. The paper focused on discovering the opinions and thoughts of Saudi Islamic social movements through the events of revolutions in the countries of the Arab Spring. The research questions included: what did

Saudi Islamic social movements say about the revolution, was the revolution good or bad, what were the reasons behind the momentum of the revolution, how could the revolution be successful, and what reasons would make these movements stand up for one specific revolution and against another. To examine these questions, I collected data from December 2010 until December 2017, analyzing 325 items, from personal Twitter accounts, Facebook, YouTube channels, Friday sermons, *Arafat* sermons, general sermons, lectures in mosques, articles, statements, and books written about Arab Spring.

My experience presenting at MSS was wonderful, and I would suggest those who have conducted research to present. Even if one is not presenting, I would still argue for students to go, even if it is to listen to other presenters. There were plenty of interesting and thought-provoking presentations, one is bound to find a topic that piques both their curiosity and interest.

Hashem Alrefai also presented *Saudi Religious Voice during Arab Spring: The Similarities and Differences* at the conference of the Sociologists of Minnesota.



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## The Sociologists of Minnesota Conference in Minnesota State University - Mankato



**Dr. Sarah Epplen**

*President Elect of the Sociologists of Minnesota, SOM*

The Sociologists of Minnesota annual conference took place on our campus October 10th and 11th 2019. As President-Elect, Dr. Sarah Epplen coordinated an expansive program featuring an impressive number of current and veteran members of the Department of Sociology and Corrections, including seven current faculty members, two emeriti faculty (Steve Buechler and Keith Luebke), eight current students, and two alumni. Current faculty members Dennis Waskul, Saiful Islam, Tyler Vaughan, and Aaron Hoy presented their recent research on topics as broad as vibrators and sexual pleasure, evolving definitions of medical sociology, jurors' constructions of capital defendants, and the risk of divorce in same-sex marriages, respectively. Other current faculty engaged in critical discussions in panel sessions. Emily Boyd served on a panel that discussed how college faculty navigate decisions about class texts when authors have become embroiled in controversy (i.e., what to do with our Michael Kimmel books now?), and Kristi Rendahl discussed how sociology adds value to non-profits with a panel of leaders from various non-profit organizations in Southern Minnesota. Finally,

faculty member Carol Glasser conducted a workshop on creating project-based and community-engaged classes. Mankato graduate students Lejla Alvarez, Sam Orinstien, Hashem Alfrefai, Killian Guthrie, Anfa Diiriye, and Emily Baker-Gunderson also presented their research.

There really was something for everyone at this year's conference, both faculty and students alike. And that is a great thing because we had over 50 students register and participate in the conference. The keynote address was co-sponsored by the Social Justice Lecture Series and featured Professor Yurie Hong, from Gustavus Adolphus College and Indivisible St. Peter/Greater Mankato. Her talk, "Words into Deeds: Making the Leap from Academics to Action", inspired the large crowd to consider how they can use the skills they already possess to participate in real democratic action.



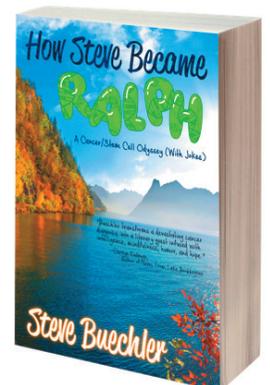
## Dr. Steve Buechler Delivers Plenary Session During the SOM Conference



At the recent conference of the Sociologists of Minnesota held on the MSU campus, Professor Emeritus and Distinguished Faculty Scholar Steve Buechler presented a plenary session on his "activities" since retirement. Steve anticipated retiring in 2017, but life intervened the year before. He was diagnosed with a lethal blood cancer and spent his final year on sick leave before retiring as planned in May 2017.

At the conference, Steve told his story titled "Surviving Leukemia, Sustaining Self, Narrating Illness: An Autoethnography of Cancerland." He first summarized his diagnosis, treatment, and recovery from acute myeloid leukemia thanks to a stem cell transplant. He also reviewed the coping strategies that sustained him throughout the ordeal. Finally, he described the value of writing his story, both as it unfolded in real time and subsequently in a memoir published in December of 2018.

Steve's transplant donor was a baby whose parents donated their newborn's umbilical cord blood to a donor bank. Steve playfully named his donor "Ralph," and the little guy engrafted, built Steve a new immune system, and saved his life. More than three years after his initial diagnosis, Steve remains cancer-free. The entire story is available in Steve's memoir *How Steve Became Ralph: A Cancer/Stem Cell Odyssey (with Jokes)*. More information, including how to order the book, is available at [www.stevebuechlerauthor.com](http://www.stevebuechlerauthor.com).





# PUBLICATIONS



**Dr. Sherrise Truesdale**

*"MeToo to #MeToo: What's in the Name?"*

Sexual Violence has been one of the most pervasive features of the American legal system (Muraskin, 2005), and the present-day outcry among women against sexual violence shows signs that they are no longer remaining silent about the issue. The #MeToo Movement is a sure sign that women are now standing up against male patriarchy, and the days of women sitting idle, tolerating actions of men, while rape, domestic violence, and sexual harassment are ignored no longer.

**\*New Criminal Justice Program**

A new criminal justice program is starting during the 2019/2020 academic year. The program is a collaboration between law enforcement and the corrections faculty. The purpose of the program is to provide students a larger breadth of experiences and broaden opportunities within the field of justice.



**Dr. Afroza Anwary**

*Fractured Lives of the Rohingya Survivors of Genocide in Attrition: The Early Warning Signs and the Actual Processes of Genocide in Myanmar* Summary of Book Chapter

The Rohingya from the Rakhine state of Myanmar have been targets of genocide. Atrocities against the Rohingya have occurred sporadically in Northern Rakhine for decades, but not at a genocidal level that was witnessed recently. This paper examines the historical process of genocide in Myanmar and the seven major genocidal strategies adopted by the Myanmar military, security forces and extremist Buddhist nationalists: territorial segregation of the Rohingya, identification of the Rohingya as illegal immigrants, killing and forced displacement of the Rohingya, restriction on their movement, marriage restriction and restriction on the number of children, restriction on religious practices, and sexual violence against Rohingya women. The results of this study, based on 60 in-depth interviews of the Rohingya refugees and fieldwork in the refugee camps of Bangladesh and a review of reports produced by human rights organisations, demonstrate how those who survived atrocities experienced the actual process of genocide in attrition in Myanmar. A prolonged historical and political process gradually marginalised the Rohingya. The Rohingya experienced sporadic atrocities and displacement from 1948 until 1961, which steadily increased after the military takeover in 1962, especially in the late 1970s, leading to periodic exodus from 1978 to 2017, and genocide in 2017. The marriage restriction policy, the absence of healthcare for Rohingya women during their reproductive age, and the two-child policy are described in this paper to show how well orchestrated the Rohingya genocide by attrition was. The paper also presents how the perpetrators planned and organised sexual assault against Rohingya women and girls. The historical episodes of atrocities and the early warning signs of genocide that I examined in this paper are crucial to taking measures to prevent genocide.

## CORRECTIONS PROGRAM STUDENTS



Emeritus faculty Dr. Barbara Carson had fun touching base with alumni of the Corrections Program (and current Carver County probation agents) **Carter Bouavichith and Stephanie Ponath** at the MN Corrections Association Conference. The conference took place at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa MN. October 2019.



**Abby Brandt** attended the MN Corrections Association Conference along with Jessica McLaughlin and Emeritus faculty Dr. Barbara Carson. Abby is in her senior year as a Corrections major and is completing her 400-hour internship with Carver County court services. October 2019.



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### Ujamaa Place Program

Ujamaa Place is a nonprofit organization in St. Paul, Minnesota. Ujamaa Place is an organization focused on young African American men in Saint Paul, primarily between the ages of 18 and 30, many of whom suffer multiple barriers to becoming stable, productive members of the community. These barriers include being undereducated, unemployed and/or unemployable, affiliated with gangs, a criminal history, homelessness, drug use, and a general marginalization by greater society. The mission of Ujamaa Place is to assist young African American men who are economically disadvantaged and have experienced repeated cycles of failure. This mission statement is rooted in the philosophy of African American culture and empowerment – that everyone is important, valuable, worthy, and loveable.

Otis Zanders, the President/CEO of Ujamaa place, received an internship with the Minnesota Department of Corrections during his final semester at Gustavus Adolphus College in January 1977. During his nearly 35-year career with the DOC, Zanders served at various locations around Minnesota and retired as warden of the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Red Wing, MN” (*Ujamaa Place*, 2019).

Corrections students, at Minnesota State University, Mankato, have a fantastic opportunity to learn and engage with Ujamaa Place and its members. There is a collaborative learning opportunity for Minnesota State University, Mankato students, where students participate in activities, as they are learning about the program. Additionally, students have the opportunity to engage with Ujamaa members through attending community lunches. The purpose is for students to enhance their cultural consciousness, which is particularly important for any of their future endeavors.