Katie McIntyre Reece, master’s Sociology student, received a $10,000 grant from Policy Research, Inc. to continue her thesis research on how people with HIV and AIDS navigate through the process of receiving disability benefits.

Reece’s research explores the application process across multiple levels—applicants, volunteer case workers and disability determiners. Using institutional ethnography methodology, she will systematically conduct interviews with people to determine points of confusion, misinformation and miscommunication.

“My research will assist the Social Security Administration in examining their processes by identifying gaps and redundancies within the system to better serve the HIV/AIDS community and hopefully others in the process,” said Reece.

Reece plans to work closely with volunteers from AID Atlanta, an organization that provides education and support services for people living with HIV and AIDS, to carry out the project and meet the needs of underserved communities.

Patricia Wells, College of Social Sciences graduate studies associate, shared the grant information and request for applications, and Sociology faculty members encouraged Reece to apply.

“I didn’t have as much optimism as my professors or my husband,” Reece admits. And even after receiving a request from Policy Research, Inc. for additional explanation about her research method, Reece wasn’t expecting good news.

However, in September, she received notification that her thesis project was one of only ten from across the nation selected for funding. Reece is also the only master’s student in the 2012-13 cohort of award recipients—the others are pursuing doctoral degrees.

“We have many outstanding students in the Sociology MA program, but Katie seemed to be the ideal candidate for this project on the basis of her work experience, scholarly interest, and methodological expertise,” said Reece’s thesis director, Dr. Paul Luken, associate professor and interim chair of Sociology. “She prepared a solid research proposal and obviously demonstrated the significance of her approach to PRI.”

The Disability Determination Process Small Grant is funded by the Social Security Administration to help graduate students conduct research on improving the disability determination process.
College of Social Sciences—doing public good

As we approach the winter break on campus, I look around and see bleary-eyed students, sleep-walking from the library to classrooms to take final exams; pajama-clad and darting out of illegally-parked cars to submit final papers; excited, nervous and eager, knocking on my office door with invitations to graduation celebrations.

I am simultaneously nostalgic and impatient for the energy and excitement of a new semester. Reflecting on Fall 2012, August brought news that Criminology’s online bachelor’s program was distinguished by U.S. News and World Report’s “Best Colleges” edition (more on p. 3). September gathered community leaders on campus in conversation about the new Carrollton-area interactive mapping project—CAMP—developed by two UWG faculty members (more on p. 3). In October, four-term Congressman Bob Barr received the Thomas B. Murphy Center for Public Service 2012 Public Citizen Award, and The WOLF Internet Radio participated in College Radio Day—winning national awards for best on-air programming and community outreach. November officially opened the Biological and Forensic Anthropology Laboratory (BAFAL) for teaching, research and service.

One of the most inspirational and illustrative outcomes of the semester was the formation of the College of Social Sciences’ mission and vision statements. Through hours of discussion, drawings, workshops and activities, the leadership of this College unanimously agreed and renewed our motivation—we are the College focused on community and doing public good.

Spring 2013 is anew with opportunities for the Social Sciences to continue to be a vital community supporter and do public good. We are expanding our Community Leaders on Campus program—bringing thought leaders onto campus and into classrooms. Our departments and labs are always exploring opportunities to be vibrant and active community partners.

So please be in touch with ideas for doing even more public good in 2013!

Dr. Amber Smallwood
Assistant Dean
amksmall@westga.edu

We are the College focused on community and doing public good.

College of Social Sciences asks the Community Relations Council...

Why are you passionate about the Carroll community?

Commissioner
Vicki J. Anderson
Carroll County District 2
Tanner Health System

“I believe our children can have a bright future right here at home, and whatever I can do to positively impact that, I’m in!”

Sheriff
Terry Langley
Carroll County
Sheriff’s Office

“I am passionate about the Carroll Community because I have seen, time after time, this community come together to work and give to those in crisis.”

Commissioner
Trent North
Carroll County District 1
Carrollton City Schools

“In Carrollton we have the best of everything, including our leaders, our technology, our hospital and our university. I am proud to call Carrollton ‘home.’”

Giving to COSS

Consider making a gift to the UWG College of Social Sciences.

Suggested levels of support:
$250
$500
$1,000

Please contact Erin Brannon, Administrative Manager, for more information. 678-839-5172 or ebrannon@westga.edu

*Gifts are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Hillary Jolly, student, Mass Communications
The West Georgia chapter of the National Broadcasting Society and The WOLF Internet Radio partnered with Carrollton DawnBreakers Rotary this fall on several projects. Dr. Brad Yates, professor of Mass Communications, and NBS-UWG members volunteered for a roadside clean-up in September. Working together, Rotarians and NBS-UWG cleared a stretch of Maple Street in Carrollton and helped at Southwire’s 2012 Back to School Giveaway.

“Students can make a huge difference through volunteering in the community. When students give back and get involved in the community, it can help them gain a stronger local connection,” said Chris Adamson, NBS-UWG chapter president.

In October, The WOLF Internet Radio promoted Rotarians Against Distracted Driving. DawnBreakers president Robin Custard and UWG student Danielle Vincent joined The WOLF’s general manager Shawn Isaacs in the studio to discuss dangers of distracted driving.

“The WOLF supports various events and service projects in the community. Our station operates for and through the support of many faculty, staff and students that live in the Carrollton area,” said Isaacs.

Andrew Post, Anthropology student, is taking his passion for anthropology into the community—to schools and libraries throughout the region. Post is also the Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory’s education assistant, a position funded through the University’s Student Research Assistant Program. This fall, Post worked with Susie Fishman-Armstrong, curator of collections at the lab, to update two traveling teaching trunks—“What is Archaeology?” and “Archaeological Excavation.”

Innovative curriculum approaches designed to fulfill Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for grades 3-8 engage students through an exploration of archaeology.

“The trunks give teachers an opportunity to enlighten their students about an interesting field that relates to everyday life,” said Post.

In 2013, Post will collaborate with the West Georgia Regional Libraries through their “Dig into Reading” summer program.

“Andrew will create a display at the Neva Lomason Library and bring real artifacts to the community via presentations at the Douglas and Carroll county libraries,” said Fishman-Armstrong.

New book explores national gun policy

Gun Policy in the United States and Canada, authored by Dr. Anthony Fleming, visiting assistant professor of Political Science, examines national-level policy making responses to key historical events such as mass murders and assassinations.

The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Georgina Leimonis and shootings that occurred at Columbine, Stockton and Vernon are used as case studies for comparing U.S. and Canadian gun policy.

“I had initially wanted to compare the U.S. with not just Canada, but with the U.K. and Australia as well. Those countries are much more like Canada and a lot less like the United States,” said Fleming.

He offers that the findings in his book should be considered not only in a global scope, but also on a local level.

“Though my research was used to compare national governments, it is important for our community to realize just how easy it is to obtain a firearm.” Fleming clarified, “For the law abiding citizen who wants to use a firearm for sport or defense, that is a good thing. For those who want to use them to commit crimes, it’s not.”
Interactive mapping highlights local assets

Dr. Jeannette Diaz, assistant professor of Psychology, and Dr. Shea Rose, assistant professor of Geosciences, brought their interactive, interdisciplinary mapping project out of the classroom and into the community for feedback and future directions.

The Carrollton Assets Mapping Project (CAMP) uses GIS mapping technology to create interactive, layerable maps that locate and describe community resources.

“Since the maps are designed around themes—e.g. thrifty living, healthy living, family resources, mental health resources, Spanish-speaking resources, etc.—they make it easy to learn about and access resources,” said Diaz.

Beyond being useful to area residents and visitors, organizations can use CAMP to create individualized maps for clients, and businesses can use it for promotion. CAMP is designed to meet multiple community needs at different levels.

“The project incorporates theories on community engagement from two disciplines, psychology and geography, with a strong commitment to service. Bringing in the community for guidance is integral to assure the project highlights existing resources and provides linkages to address real concerns in our community,” said Rose.

Though the project is fluid and ongoing, maps will be available in spring 2013.

Online program ranked by U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News and World Report awarded high rankings to the online Criminology B.S. program—the first and only fully-online undergraduate degree program at the University.

The program ranked 26 in online bachelor’s programs for Student Services and Technology. Criteria included access to career placement assistance, live tutoring and live streaming video.

“The online program in Criminology strives to bring the same quality delivered in the classroom to an online platform. We utilize online lectures and interactive discussions as a means of engaging our students off-campus and it has seemed to be really successful,” said Laura Lutgen, online instructor.

Criminology’s Faculty Credentials and Training placed 27. Consideration was given to programs whose faculty have a Ph.D., at least two years of online teaching experience, and schools that finance online instructor training.

“Criminology faculty members are continuously engaged in online instructional training. Some have already become, and soon all will be, certified as five-star quality-matters instructors,” said Dr. David Jenks, department chair.

The online Criminology program placed in the top third of all ranked programs for these two ratings indicators.