Dr. Luken Awarded

By Suresh Neupane

Chair of the Department of Sociology, Dr. Paul Luken, has been awarded with this year’s Outstanding Mentor Award.

In a program organized by the College of Social Sciences in March, Dr. Luken was presented the award by Dean McCandless.

Speaking to us briefly after the award ceremony, Dr. Luken said that the award meant a lot to him and to the Department. “When I am asked about to write about my life as a sociologist or my philosophy of education, I always recall those people who guided me and helped me to get to where I am today,” he said, adding, “Since there is no way that I can repay those people, I try to pay it forward to my students, my advisees, and my colleagues in the Sociology Department.”

Dr. Luken has been a professor at the University of West Georgia for the past decade. He assumed the office as the Chair of the Department in 2012.

“I try to pay it forward to my students, my advisees, and my colleagues in the Sociology Department.”

Dr. Luken volunteering at the “Empty Bowls” event to benefit Carroll County Soup Kitchen.
NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

By Bethany Austin

Have you met Dr. Emily McKendry-Smith?

Dr. McKendry-Smith is one of the new professors in the University of West Georgia’s Sociology department. She is originally from Kansas, and spent her childhood growing up there. As an undergraduate, she studied Anthropology and Sociology as one combined major, and she also majored in Political Science! However, as a graduate student she decided to study Sociology because her most prominent interest was in society and religion. Dr. McKendry-Smith spent six months living in Nepal. While she was there she observed religious places and interviewed seventy women. When she got back to the United States she used the information she gathered to write her dissertation. Dr. McKendry-Smith received her degree from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, and also taught there while she was completing her PhD. Dr. McKendry-Smith arrived at West Georgia in the fall, and the Sociology department is honored to have her as a new professor!

Do you know Dr. Jennifer Weber?

Dr. Weber joined the University of West Georgia's sociology department in the fall of 2013. Dr. Weber is originally from Ohio and spent her childhood growing up in Lima, Ohio. She is the oldest child in her family and has three younger sisters. Dr. Weber received her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri. While she was there, she studied teen fathers and teen pregnancy. Dr. Weber has spent time working with homeless girls and has helped with a teen pregnancy prevention program. She has done research on the MTV shows *Sixteen and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom*. The University of West Georgia is lucky to have Dr. Weber as part of the sociology department!

Have You Taken a Class from Dr. Winston Tripp?

Dr. Tripp has been an instructor at the University of West Georgia since fall 2011, but he recently became the sociology department's newest assistant professor. Dr. Tripp is known for being the undergraduate and graduate statistics professor. However, he is also interested in social movements, environmental sociology, political sociology and social inequality. Dr. Tripp grew up in Nevada, and went to the University of Oregon for his undergraduate degree. He later received his Ph.D for Penn State University. One fact that most students do not know about Dr. Tripp is that he used to be a firefighter. The sociology department is thrilled to welcome Dr. Tripp as an assistant professor!
Sociology Department Welcomes
Departmental Assistant, Inho Abdich
By Tommie Simon

In the summer of 2013, Inho Abdich joined the Department of Sociology at the University of West Georgia. As the wife of a retired airman, Inho has travelled extensively, living in places as diverse as Kaiserslautern, Germany and Okinawa, Japan.

She hails originally from South Korea, but moved with her husband to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina where they lived for a year and a half before moving to Germany. They lived in Kaiserslautern for four years, and from there, they moved to Grissom Air Force Base, Indiana. Inho’s travels continued to Okinawa, Japan; Clovis, New Mexico; Montgomery, Alabama; and Sarasota, Florida. Most recently, Inho and her husband moved to Villa Rica, Georgia, to be near their son, daughter-in-law, and three-year old grandson.

Internship Spotlight: Atlanta Speech School
By Jamila Pass

This upcoming summer, I look forward to returning as an employee of the Atlanta Speech School as Camp Assistant. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience last summer at the Speech School. The bonds I formed, the lives I touched, and the individuals I came in contact with were phenomenal. Words cannot describe how wonderful of an experience I encountered. The children were so enthused about coming to camp and learning every single day. The main focus of the day was not “play time” outside; instead it was engaging in the morning group activities, internet learning exercises, assigned readings, arts and crafts projects, and one highlight for the day was the dancing after lunch. The dancing was a means of stimulating their minds to be more focused for the activities after lunch. Not only were the children a joy to work with, but so was the staff, especially the Summer Excursions staff. Each individual on that team was very experienced, knowledgeable and helpful. They exhibited a high level of patience in dealing with the children and were creative in the activities and lessons planned to keep the children engaged in the lessons. Mr. Cressman was more than a wonderful director of the camp was also extremely organized and made the program for the children one that was engaging and fun-filled. He was very sensitive to employees’ requests as long as requests were made in a timely manner. Altogether, my experience couldn’t have been better and I look forward to returning in June.
Senior Seminar Students Present Research
Winter Snow Storms 2014

By Walter Holsey

A winter storm covered much of the Deep South with snow and ice at the beginning of the semester. Two to three inches fell instantly, closing roads and making them unsafe for driving. The university was surprised by the sudden storm that came while we were in class. There were little to no preparations because the storm came with little warning. Because of the storm, people were stuck in Carrollton away from their families.

Senior Vincent Warner from Greenville, GA said he loved the snow week; it was like a mini vacation. His apartment complex was without power for a day but they had no wireless Internet for 4 weeks. Those were the first 4 weeks of the school year so the Internet was very important to stay up to date with classes. Vincent said it was a great time to get out and socialize and have fun in the snow. The snowstorm was his first time seeing snow.

A Personal Reflection on Snow

By Eric Seamon

When it snowed here in Georgia I was surprised to find out that it would cause schools to close, as this is not something I am used to in this area. Since I come from up north I did not take the weather seriously and even attempted to drive my car on the icy roads. My car was unable to move and I thought I was stuck until I got some help from someone who gave my car a push! As to why school was cancelled, the ice was a major factor more than the snow itself. Roads conditions to deciding when school is cancelled and in this case, as the roads were all icy, they had to cancel school. My experience of attempting to drive showed me how serious weather conditions can be.

I overall felt that the snow days were a nice experience; I got to explore and take pictures of the snow and learn to snow board down a hill, even though I fell. It was fun to see the ground covered in snow and it gave the campus a different feel as far as the environment goes. I felt that it helped me catch up on my studies and was nice while it lasted.
Sociology Students Present at Research Day

The College of Social Sciences held Research Day on March 26, 2014. Four students from the Department of Sociology presented their research.

Aaron Rodriguez: “Can Democracy Exist in Oil Dependent Middle East?”
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Neema Noori

Racquel Coleman: “A Look into the Lebanese Conflict: A Struggle for Power”
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Neema Noori

John Belcher: “ARAMCO-Saudi Arabian Development: Conditions in Oil Camps”
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Neema Noori

Chelsea Sutton: “The Affordable Care Act: What does it mean for the Consumer?”
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Paul Luken
Congratulations to Our Graduates!

**Spring 2014**

**Bachelor of Science**

Adebukunola O. E. Adeniyi
Angela Nicole Brodsky
Saysha Yanique Buchanan
Audrey M. Butler
Andre L. Clark
Melanie Sharai Cunningham
Austin Katrina DePratto
Edrica Michelle Ferguson
Derrick Tyronne Grant
Andrew Haliburton III
Sandtron Leon Harrell
Ezacia Danielle Hill
Brittney M. James
Krislyn LoRen Taylor Johnson
Lanee Diamond Little
Victoria Simone Falont’e Long
Amanda M. Masters
Alicia Dianne Moreland Mathis
Teixiera Nicole Liza Monts
Sarah A. O’Neill
Trevor Kent Snapp
George Turner III

**Spring 2014 continued**

Alexandra Marjorie Vick
Brittania Leigh Weathersbee
Kelsey Megan West
Heather Torrance Williamson

**Spring 2014**

**Master of Arts**

Anna Christian Holke
Jessica Cherokee Madruga
Kelsey M. Stephens
Sociology 2014 Honors & Awards Ceremony

Dr. McKendry-Smith inducts students into Alpha Kappa Delta., the International Sociology Honors Society.

Dr. Luken presents Tommie Simon with the William T. Simon Outstanding

Dr. Luken presents Heather T. Williamson with the award for Outstanding Senior.

Dr. Katie Acosta of Georgia State University gives the 2014 AKD Initiation Lecture on “Stepping Into Queer Parenting.”
Publications & Presentations
Recent Scholarship by Sociology Faculty and Students

Paul Luken, PhD
- Outstanding Mentor Award: Paul Luken (Sociology) 2014, awarded by the College of Social Sciences.

Emily McKendry-Smith, PhD

Tiffany Parsons, MA

Winston Tripp, PhD

Help continue the tradition of high quality instruction, research, and service in the Department of Sociology by making a gift to the Department's Foundation. These funds go to support students student activities, such as conferences and travel, and awards. We are grateful to all our alumni and friends for your generous support.

You can make a gift online by clicking here. Under “Gift Designation,” please choose “Other” and then specify “Sociology Department.”
University of West Georgia
Department of Sociology
Carrollton, GA 30118

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Tommie Simon  Eric Seamon
Jamila Pass  Bethany Austin

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To comment on the sociNews, write to mckendry@westga.edu. Use the same email address if you are interested in contributing to the next issue.

Visit us on the web: www.westga.edu/sociology