The College of Social Sciences held Community Leaders on Campus days November 2–3. This event welcomed leaders from different organizations in the community to speak to several classes about their work. We were honored to have Jan Gibbs, Denice Hicks, Jeff Wegner, Keihan Nahri and Dr. Michael Flood visit and share their experience and knowledge.

Dr. McCandless’ Marriage and Family class welcomed Jan Gibbs. She is the Executive Director at the West Georgia Rape Crisis Center where she has been working for nine years.

Mrs. Gibbs became a mother at a young age and had to postpone school. Initially, it was only for a short period of time, but she had two more children, thus delaying school even longer. Years later, and with the encouragement of a friend, Mrs. Gibbs decided to go back to school and earned her degree from Mercer University in Human Services. Her role at WGRCC has combined her interest in both addiction and women’s issues.

Mrs. Gibbs’ presentation on Family and Intimate Partner Violence offered a lot of insight to the realities of violence. Seventy to eighty percent of people who are victims of sexual abuse know their attacker. Even more dreadful is that most of the time women are abused by a family member - a husband, brother-in-law, uncle, and, sadly, even a father. With high percentages like these it isn’t shocking that the most dangerous place for a woman is in her home. Mrs. Gibbs explains that sexual violence is only one of the types of violence that men and women face; other forms of violence include family, physical, and emotional. It is a cycle of abuse that typically begins with emotional abuse which then can escalate towards threats, and then possibly physical and even sexual violence. Violence is a social problem that exists, but one that most of us are unaware of how to handle.

The West Georgia Rape Crisis Center has trained staff that assists people in crisis situations. There is also a crisis line available

Welcome Winston Tripp
By: Nadja Moore

New to the University of West Georgia Sociology department is Winston Tripp, originally from Nevada. Mr. Tripp pursued his undergraduate study at the University of Oregon and is working on his PhD at Penn State University. Interested particularly in environmental issues, he served as a Federal Firefighter and has worked with non-profit organizations for a number of years. He returned to graduate school to learn more about how to make a change and understand more about how people interact with their environment. His interest in environmental studies eventually sparked an interest in sociology. Before joining the West Georgia community in August, Mr. Tripp has taught Political Sociology.

Continued page 2
CLOC Cont’d

Denice Hicks

24 hours a day. Internship and volunteer opportunities are offered to students both female and male. Volunteers and interns are required to go through training first. If you are interested in volunteering, the next training is spring 2012 around late March or early April. Additionally, the West Georgia Rape Crisis Center works closely with health services on the UWG campus, so if you ever find yourself or someone you know in need, help is available right on campus. The crisis line can be reached 24 hours a day at 770.834.7273 and the administrative line is 770.834.8905.

Another guest, Denice Hicks, came to speak in Professor Parson’s Globalization and Women class. She is the founder of My Sister’s Keeper in Bremen, GA which is a relatively new non-profit in the area - established in 2010. Mrs. Hicks is from Powder Springs, Georgia and grew up in a middle class family. She married straight out of high school and has 5 children (1 daughter and 4 sons) and 4 grandchildren. It may seem she’s had the “traditional,” American life, but in class she opened up and shared some of her own experiences with violence and abuse, although it was not in her plans to do so.

Mrs. Hicks is a very strong woman and passionate about her work. She is also a woman who relies heavily on her faith. My Sister’s Keeper is an organization that aims to help women in prostitution and to help them get out of the business. One of the long term goals is to establish a recovering home/safe house for mothers and children who want to get out of that lifestyle. A few examples of what the safe house would provide are education about basic life skills, such as balancing a checkbook, and GED/career training.

Although becoming involved in this type of work can be dangerous, Mrs. Hicks is dedicated to helping and “loving” these women, women who are often shunned by the rest of society. This is why Mrs. Hicks and her organization are so outstanding.

Students also got the opportunity to meet Jeff Wegner, a spiritual coordinator at the Oak Brook Hospice and a very influential community leader. He spoke in Mr. Tripp’s class about the struggle with spirituality in American society. Mr. Wegner began talking to the class about how spirituality is still very much present even though we live in a more or less secular society. He mentioned that many of us tend to develop what he calls a ‘patchwork religion,’ one that is essentially built from bits and pieces taken from different traditions that do not necessarily fit a specific denomination.

He discussed his experience as a bereavement counselor at the hospice and his day-to-day responsibility to provide emotional and spiritual support to terminally ill patients and their loved ones. He believes that many of his patients, as well as their families, develop a strong connection to their spirituality in order to come to terms with their conditions. He notes that even though many people think that it may be the end for the terminally ill, it is actually the beginning. When asked how one can provide support, he stressed the importance of companionship. Companion-ship, according to Mr. Wegner, makes a huge impact on those facing death. Talking to them, asking questions, and lending an ear “brings a person back to where they want to be.” His experiences from working in the hospice and meeting different people near the end of their lives have given him a much deeper understanding for his own existence and spirituality and from this he urges students to appreciate all the complexities that life has to offer.

Dr. Noori’s students had the pleasure of welcoming Keihan Nahri who is currently the Telecommunications Manager here at the University of West Georgia. A native of Iran, he discussed life before, during and after the Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. He talked about how the war had disrupted the once peaceful society in Iran and how in the midst of chaos, life changed for every citizen. Keihan had always been invested in his education from a young age, but was forced to put it on hold because the universities had closed down due to the conflict. Feeling that there was no escape, he had no choice but to join the army. As a soldier in the Revolutionary Army, he went through several experiences that taught him many lessons he holds dear to this day.

After two years of mandatory service, Nahri was determined to travel to the United
CLOC Cont’d

States to further his education. Due to political turmoil in the Middle East, however, he found it extremely difficult to obtain a visa. After two years of constant rejection, and on the verge of giving up, he was finally granted a visa to study in the United States. His message to students emphasized the importance of appreciating all that society has to offer in the United States. Throughout his experiences, he has learned that in any situation a person is faced with, no matter how unexpected it is, perseverance is the key to survival and success. He passionately believes that education is a powerful tool and should never be taken for granted.

Dr. Michael Flood spoke to students in Dr. Luken’s Sociology of Medicine class. Originally from Washington, D.C., Dr. Flood attended Duke University and received bachelor’s degrees in chemistry and religion before studying medicine at Emory University. He found his way to Chicago and while there he practiced internal medicine before moving to Georgia. His career has provided him the opportunity to work in a variety of medical organizations including private practice, HMO, and now Tanner Medical Center, and he feels that “the health care reform is in the right direction”. In his speech, he addressed how he helps most patients who can’t afford or have no health insurance. He also spoke of the Accountable Care Organization, which is a type of payment and delivery reform model that seeks to tie provider reimbursements to quality metrics and reductions in the total cost of care for an assigned population of patients. Another issue he touched on was the clinical pathway which promotes organized and efficient care based on the evidence based practice. In essence, most hospitals get higher ratings if they are efficient. In the medical practice, sometimes one measures things they can’t control especially when a patient is being treated or has had a surgical procedure. Health reform gives practices money to get Electrical Medical Record (EMR).

This CLOC experience gave Sociology students the opportunity to speak with prominent leaders in the community and gain insight into otherwise unfamiliar specialties. The awareness gained by having these distinctive individuals join us in the classroom is an invaluable asset to the students in the department. Thank you to all who participated in this special event.

(Compiled by Faith Payne. Contributions by Esmirna Valdez, Nadja Moore, and Chisom Okponyia)
Tripp Cont’d

Social Inequality and Statistics at Penn State University.

What attracted him most to the University of West Georgia is the emphasis on the balance between teaching, research and connecting with the community. Teachers have a chance to interact more with their students and coming from Penn State, a much larger school, he feels that this is essential. Mr. Tripp’s goal is to not only teach but to work on establishing a strong link between students and the community through various events such as Community Leaders on Campus day. He is also working on raising awareness about environmental issues and is teaching the community more about the importance of being environmentally friendly.

Mr. Tripp will be teaching Collective Behavior and Social Movements, Statistics for Social Sciences and Introductory Sociology in the spring. His advice for students taking his class, as well as any other sociology class, is to not focus too much on memorizing facts and regurgitating for tests but to use the valuable information learned in class to develop and express arguments. He believes that developing critical thinking skills are essential to succeeding in the field of Sociology.

Attention Undergrads: University of Alabama Summer Program

The University of Alabama at Birmingham will be offering a research experience for undergraduates called Using the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics to Study Crime. It will be held June 7 through July 27, 2012 at the Birmingham campus. This is the third year of the program and it is sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

This 8-week program is designed for undergraduate students who want “hands-on” research experience and for those who are interested in pursuing post-graduate degrees in fields such as Criminal Justice, Sociology, Public Policy, Forensic Science, Computer Science, Biology, and Chemistry. The program is targeted to undergraduate students with at least 60 hours of college credit. A total of 12 students will be selected for the summer, 2012 program. Students from underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

See page 9 “Research Experience” for full details.

Mr. Henry E. Dufour, Jr.

Mr. Henry E. Dufour Jr., a faculty member in the former Department of Sociology and Criminology, died Friday, October 21, 2011. He was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and received his B.A. and Master’s in Sociology at Louisiana State University, and he continued his doctoral studies at Georgia State University. He worked at the Louisiana State Prison at Angola, Louisiana, for five years before turning to teaching at Nichols State University. In 1965 he came to West Georgia College where he established the criminology program before retiring in 1995. Henry Dufour served on Advisory Council and Juvenile Justice Committees for the Governor of Georgia and was a consultant for a number of police departments throughout the state.

Adapted from the Times-Georgian 10/26/11
The Georgia Sociological Association’s Annual Meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia this year between October 20th and 22nd. Registration began on Thursday at 3pm, after which most attended a panel concerning the future of online education. West Georgia’s Dr. Neema Noori, along with three other professors of sociology, engaged in the discussion complete with a question and answer section involving the attentive audience. The only other scheduled item for the conference on Thursday was an executive board meeting.

The first presenters from West Georgia were Joshua Reitz, Susanna Sierra, and Tiffany Jenkins, who woke up bright and early on Friday for their panel at 8am. They presented results from a survey conducted among West Georgia students regarding their conceptions of and participation in the informal economy. The next to present was Cambria Moon during the Changing Social Institutions and Beyond paper session with her work entitled, “The Tea Party in Georgia: A Rural & Decentralized, Social Movement Hybrid?”

The Research in Women’s Studies paper session was held at 3pm and was almost completely comprised of West Georgia students, including Sara Simonis, Jessica Madruga, and Ashley Quartey. Sara engaged the audience first with a presentation and subsequent discussion regarding her topic, “Gender as Religion: A Theoretical Contribution.” Jessica followed with “Police Brutality in the American Home,” which provided a needed perspective on one often ignored facet of domestic violence. Ashley ended the panel with a presentation entitled, “Amazon Women: From Historical to Myth to Current Influence.”

The last panel that West Georgia participated in was the Global, Local, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives paper session. Joseph Stincer and Dixie Curley represented West Georgia during this session. Dixie Curley presented “The Navajo Uranium Legacies: An Analysis of Policy,” which included the history of this legacy, as well as suggestions for future research. Joseph was the last student to present at the GSA conference representing West Georgia. He provided a fascinating report of his work, “Globalized Islam: American Assimilation of Muslim Communities,” which was supplemented with an account of his personal experience regarding the topic.
As students in the Department of Sociology, we are very fortunate to have such wonderful professors! Our teaching staff comes from different backgrounds, which allows us to learn about society and social problems from a wide range of perspectives. They deeply care about us and go out of their way to ensure that we not only absorb the material but are involved in the classroom as well. Most importantly however, they teach us the importance of applying what we learn in a class to the “real world”. I mean, what good is it to have knowledge if we don’t know or aren’t taught how to apply it?

Each of our professors has a unique teaching style that enhances our learning. But there is one in particular who stands out because of her creative method for keeping her students focused. We all know that our minds wander easily (as it has probably done so while reading this), even during lectures, no matter how interesting they are. So she provides her students with pipe cleaners (paid out of her pocket!) because adult learners listen better when they are doing things with their hands. If you have been lucky enough to take this professor you will know who I am talking about, if not you really should consider registering for one of the five classes she is offering next semester (Spring 2012). The professor I am referring to is Vivien Wood and this year we are fortunate to finally have her as a full-time professor.

Professor Wood received her Bachelor’s degree at Mississippi State University and she received her Master’s degree here, at the University of West Georgia. Before becoming a full-time Sociology professor she worked in the Juvenile Justice Department for thirty years where one of her tasks was to train all the new hires. Her versatile background allows her to provide different levels of insight in her lectures, making them relevant and applicable to everyday life. She retired after serving the Juvenile Justice Department last September and had been teaching part time since 2002.

Although her previous work background is in Criminology, she views the world through a sociological perspective. She believes sociology “prepares you for being able to take any degree you have and make the most of it” and that a sociological paradigm is “most versatile and applicable.” She also cares about her students and is available and willing to help them succeed.

Professor Wood is an extraordinary example of a hard working person and an excellent representation of the high quality professors that are found in the Department of Sociology. We are happy to have her here full time. If you are a student and have not had the opportunity to take one of her classes, do it! I took her Social Inequality course and it was a class that I really enjoyed and I found to be eye-opening and applicable to everyone, everywhere.
Todd Matthews

Professional:
Appointed Assistant Dean of the College of Social Sciences on January 1, 2011

Publications:

Articles:


Book Reviews:


Other Publications:

Presentations:

2011 Matthews, Todd L., Catherine Jenks, L. Michael Johnson and Richard Lemke. “Introducing the West Georgia Area Survey: Results from the First Regional Survey of Area Residents.” University of West Georgia Graduate Education Forum, Carrollton, GA.

2010 Matthews, Todd L. and Andrea M. Brace. “Spatial Variations in Health Insurance Coverage in the State of Georgia” (Poster). Centers for Disease Control GeoSWG meeting, Atlanta, GA.


2010 Matthews, Todd L. and Andrea M. Bruce. “Inequality and Health in Georgia Counties.” Georgia Sociological Association meeting, Decatur, GA.

2010 Matthews, Todd L. “Revisiting Dumping in Dixie Twenty Years Later.” Mid South Sociological Association meeting, Baton Rouge, LA.
Todd Matthews

2010 Matthews, Todd L. “Environmental Inequality in the South Then and Now.” Mid South Sociological Association meeting, Baton Rouge, LA.

Other Conference Participation:

2011 Organizer, session chair, and panelist. “To Be (Applied) or Not to Be (Applied)? Is That the Question?: Applied Sociology in Georgia.” Georgia Sociological Association meeting, Savannah, GA.

2010 Student session moderator. Georgia Sociological Association meeting, Decatur, GA.

2010 Organizer and session chair. “Twenty Years after Dumping in Dixie: Environmental Inequality in the U.S. South.” Mid South Sociological Association meeting, Baton Rouge, LA.

Presentations to community:

“Viewing the Environment through the Lens of Inequality.” UWG Arts and Sciences @ the Library series, Carroll County Public Library, Carrollton, GA, 2011

Media:

Print:

“Survey: Most in Region Happy with their Lives” (quoted on West Georgia Area Survey) - The Times Georgian – July 10, 2011

“Viewing the Environment through the Lens of Inequality” - The Times Georgian – April 8, 2011

Professional Service:

Georgia Sociological Association Member at Large (Applied and Clinical Sociology committee chair), 2010-present
Georgia Sociological Association Scholarship Committee, 2011-present

Paul Luken

Conference and Workshop Presentations:


Professional Service:

Vice-President and newsletter editor of the International Sociological Association Thematic Group on Institutional Ethnography and the Group’s Programme Coordinator for the upcoming ISA Forum on Sociology to be held in Buenos Aires, August 2012.

Chair, Society for the Study of Social Problems Committee on Committees; and member of the Transnational Initiative Committee.
Faculty Scholarship

Neema Noori

Grants:
Received a $12,000 grant from IREX to teach a class on Central Asian Culture, Geography, and History at Clark Atlanta University. The course included several students from the University of West Georgia.

Conferences:

Sponsored students who presented research at the Middle East Student Symposium at GCSU.

Research Experiences for Undergraduates

Announcing the Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Program at The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Using the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics to Study Crime
June 7 – July 27, 2012
http://www.cis.uab.edu/UABCrimeREU

Program Highlights:

- This 8-week NSF summer program is designed for undergraduate students across the Southeast who want “hands-on” research experience and for those who are interested in pursuing post-graduate degrees in fields such as Criminal Justice, Forensic Science, Computer Science, Sociology, Public Policy, Biology, and Chemistry.
- The program is targeted to current undergraduate students with at least 60 hours of college credit. A total of 12 students will be selected for the summer 2012 program. Students who complete an undergraduate degree before June, 2012 will not be eligible.
- Students will have the opportunity to work closely with faculty from UAB’s Department of Justice Sciences and Department of Computer and Information Sciences. The 8 REU faculty members are nationally recognized for their expertise in working with large data sets, data mining and manipulation, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and DNA analysis.
- Students will conduct research in one of three core areas: 1) Criminal Justice, 2) Forensic Science, or 3) Computer Forensics.
- Students will work with a faculty mentor in their research track for 35-40 hours per week to complete one or more projects during the summer experience. In some cases students will work directly with a local criminal justice agency on their project.
- Each Friday during the 8-week program, students will attend a luncheon that includes special presentations from local criminal justice professionals and time to interact with other REU students and faculty. Students will make a presentation of their research experience during the final Friday luncheon.
- Students will receive tours of several major criminal justice agencies in Alabama.
- Students selected for the program will receive free lodging, food (up to $30 per day), and travel (up to $250) to UAB.
- Students will receive a stipend of $450 per week.
- Students will enjoy access to UAB libraries, labs, dining facilities, and the Campus Recreation Center. Tours of the Birmingham area and special events are also planned.
- The application form is available on the program website at http://www.cis.uab.edu/UABCrimeREU. The submission deadline is February 17, 2012.
- Please contact Dr. Kent Kerley at krkerley@uab.edu or 205-934-8548 if you have questions.
CALL FOR PAPERS

30th SouthEastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium
Identity and Inequality in Society
Atlanta, Georgia
February 24-25, 2012

The 30th annual SEUSS will be held at Emory University. The Symposium provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to present their research at a professional meeting. Presentations in any area of sociology are welcome. Students whose papers are accepted will give a 12-15 minute presentation of their research.

All presenters will receive Certificates of Professional Participation. Abstracts of all presented papers are published in the Symposium Proceedings. The three best papers will receive an Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research (1st place $100, 2nd place $75, 3rd place $50).*

A banquet will be held on February 24th for all participants. The keynote speaker at the banquet is Dr. Nikki Khanna (B.A. 1997, Ph.D. 2007 Emory University), from the Department of Sociology at the University of Vermont. Her address will stem from her recently published book, *Biracial In America: Forming and Performing Racial Identity.*
APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Part I. Application Deadline: Friday, January 27, 2012

Interested students should email Dr. Karen A. Hegtvedt (khegtve@emory.edu) the following items with the term “SEUSS” in the subject line:
1. A one-page abstract*
2. A faculty letter of support indicating that the student’s research is, or will be completed and ready for presentation on February 25, 2012.

* To be considered for an Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research, completed papers must be submitted by Friday, January 27, 2012.

Part II. Application Acceptance

Dr. Hegtvedt will notify students of their acceptance and registration information the week of February 6-10, 2012. A $25 registration fee is necessary to help defray the costs of the banquet and proceedings. This fee is required for all students participating in the symposium and all faculty attending the banquet.

Co-Sponsored by Emory University Department of Sociology; Morehouse College Department of Sociology; and the Emory Center for Ethics

For more information about SEUSS, please visit:
www.sociology.emory.edu/SEUSS/
Greetings from the Chair

Dear Sociology community,

It is my pleasure to address you as Interim Chair of the Department of Sociology for the academic year, 2011-2012. This is certainly an exciting time for me as well as our Department. Recently, the College of Arts and Sciences split into new entities, with our Department becoming an integral component of the new College of Social Sciences. We are experiencing record enrollments for both our undergraduate and graduate programs in Sociology. Our faculty is dedicated to teaching and expanding the facets of our discipline to our students, promulgating knowledge of our field through breakthrough research, and to serving our community. Sociology students can certainly expect skilled guidance, and inclusion in academic endeavors through classroom instruction, collaborative research and participation at conferences, and through our student organizations. Our alumni have excelled in the areas of teaching, social work, public sector employment and in many other endeavors. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments and concerns that you may have, at bsanders@westga.edu or 678 839-4995. Thanks, and good luck this coming year!

Robert Sanders