

2021 NEWSLETTER

Department Chair

Dear Alumni and Friends,

I'm happy that we have successfully made it through a tough year. The pandemic changed how we organized our days and taught our classes. Most of our classes were online. We became more familiar with online technology than many of us ever expected. Our office was down to a skeleton crew and on-campus workers and visitors were at a minimum. All this said, the semester went well. In my class, conducted on Zoom, the students were receptive and curious. Some have even told me that the online format has given them the freedom and courage to participate in discussion as never before. They did miss the face-to-face interactions. The new chancellor, Austin Lane, has announced we will be back to normal in the fall, barring any unforeseen spikes in COVID-19 cases. We will still wear masks, social distance, and wash our hand obsessively but as vaccination rates increase we hope to return to normal. I have appreciated how everyone in the department has adapted and kept their focus on our mission of educating our students.

The university is nearly reorganized. Sociology is still in the process stage. If we do reorganize by the fall, we will now be part of the School of Anthropology, Political Science, and Sociology. There will be a director for the school. Sociology will still be a major with undergraduate and graduate programs, so we will be academically unchanged. One thing is certain, we will continue to offer a first-class education to our students in the Sociology major.

The Sociology programs are humming along during the pandemic. Dr. Sherkat, our graduate director, focused on student recruitment. Our graduate program is welcoming our largest cohort in a few years and we are very excited to meet these new students and integrate them into the department.

Dr. Wienke has also focused on recruitment and retention. His efforts have helped increase our number of majors. We have even had entering freshman interested in Sociology, an unusual but welcome phenomenon. Thanks to the efforts of our directors, the Sociology major remains a viable and exciting major offering a unique point of view to the SIU student.

We hosted fascinating speakers on Zoom this year, drawing faculty and students from across campus.

Our office may have been low on foot traffic this semester but our office administrator, Judy Rose, held down the fort in person and online. We owe Judy a big thank you for all her behind the scenes work and her wisdom and kindness to everyone who comes in the office, calls, or emails. I also want to thank Deidra McLaughlin, our student office worker, who has done another year of unflagging work.

Finally, I want to thank our donors. I have a special thanks for our scholarship sponsors. They reward our students for their hard work and achievements and enable them to spend time working on their studies through their generous gifts. I also want to thank all of our donors. The gifts that each donor contributes are important in keeping our Sociology program viable by sponsoring student service activities, travel, and funding guest speakers.

I want to thank everyone for making this a rewarding and memorable year. We will likely look back upon this year with sociological eye and find that we learned more than we thought.

Sincerely,

William F. Danaher

William F. Danaher

Graduate Program

Stepping back into the graduate director's slot after 15 years in the middle of a pandemic was challenging, but SIU's graduate programs have weathered the viral storm. We lost several prospective graduate students to the uncertainty and because of visa troubles, but a few of them are returning after deferring for a year. Indeed, the 2021 cohort will include 5 new PhD students and 4 new MA students. We are looking forward to welcoming this diverse new cohort which includes students from Bangladesh, Kuwait, Nigeria, and the United States.

We managed to hang on to one new student in the 2020 cohort, Scott Miller, an MA student who came to us from Lindenwood University. I had the pleasure of working with Scott as my GA, and he is going to be a winner!

Despite the zoom meetings and various restrictions, Rebecca Tuxhorn completed her dissertation, "How are Women Farmers "Doing" and "Undoing" Gender?: An Exploration of Women's Gender Practices in Farming" and is settling in to her position at Southeast Louisiana University. Conor Byrne also finished his MA thesis, "The Framing of the Common Core Standards in the New York Times and Chicago Tribune from 2014-2015."

Several of our students published research in peer-reviewed outlets. Rebecca Bolinski is co-author on papers published in *Social Science and Medicine* and *Journal of Rural Health*. Both Trisha Crawshaw and Kendra Pospisil published sole-authored papers in *Journal of Fat Studies*, and Trisha also published a book review in *Gender and Society*. Rebecca Tuxhorn published a sole-authored paper in *Critical Criminology*.

Our students were active in scholarly associations, though meetings were either cancelled or moved online. Our students had papers accepted for presentation at a variety of conferences, including the American Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Midwest Sociological Society, the American Society of Criminology, Sexuality Studies Association, Sociologist for Women in Society, and the Addiction Health Services Conference. Presentations were made (or would have been made) by Jeremy Allen, Clay Awsumb, Daniel Baltz, Rebecca Bolinski, Rick Braatz, Hannah Crane, Tori Neal, and Kendra Pospisil. A full rendering of our graduate students' publications and presentations is below.

The generosity of our alumni has enabled us to facilitate graduate student research and to enable their studies. This year, we awarded Clay Awsumb the J. Mark Wehrle Dissertation Scholarship in Sociology. The David L. Briscoe Book Scholarships for Graduate Students in the Department of Sociology were awarded to Daniel Baltz, Scott Miller and Kendra Pospisil. In addition to these awards, Kendra Pospisil received the Graduate School's Dissertation Research Assistantship, and Hannah Crane was awarded the Celia M. Howard Fellowship in Public Policy, both for the 2021-22 school year.

We are looking forward to another exciting year in SIU Sociology. Send us your students, they will learn, finish their degrees, and then you can hire them!

Darren E. Sherkat - Graduate Director

Undergraduate Program

The 2020-2021 school year at SIU will not soon be forgotten -- thanks to Covid-19, a once-in-a-life-time health crisis. Like other departments at SIU, the Department of Sociology operated most of its day-to-day activities over the internet, using various technologies to teach courses, facilitate office hours, organize events, and hold meetings. Although a few faculty in the department taught in person, most of us taught and interacted with our students online. If my experience of working in this environment is any indication, most faculty, staff, and students at SIU found the 2020-2021 school year to be both challenging and rewarding. In my case, I developed new skills and learned how to adjust my teaching and service activities in ways that better address the needs of the times, all while maintaining an active research agenda.

As the undergraduate program director, I spent much of the past year focused on the recruitment of new majors and the retention of existing majors. For example, with help from University Communications and Marketing, I coordinated a marketing campaign for the Department of Sociology. Perhaps you've seen our ads on Facebook or Instagram: *Interested in social justice? Concerned about social change? Want to better understand cultural differences? Sociology might be the major for you!* Also, with the help of a former SIU student, I put together a promotional video starring our very own Dr. Sherkat. The video is now embedded into the department website. You should check it out if you haven't already done so at [https:// cola.siu.edu/sociology/](https://cola.siu.edu/sociology/)

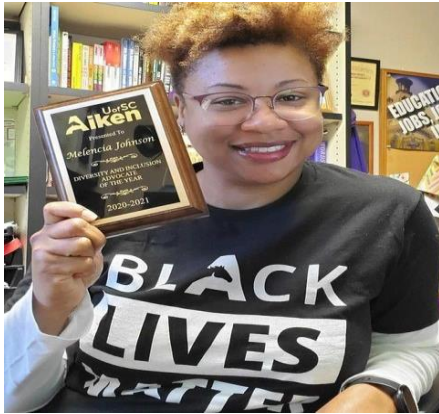
Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cancellation of annual events, and other changes, our undergraduate students also found ways to stay active and productive in 2020-2021. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Undergraduate Sociology Club -- or "Soc Club," as most of us call it. SOC Club recruited new members, held meetings both online and offline, organized two movie nights, including ones describing their participation in SOC Club as the highlight of their week.

As expected, the department saw several students graduate, both in the fall and spring semesters. We wish them well in their future endeavors. The department also saw the addition of several new students to the major. We look forward to their contributions to the department. Despite declining enrollment in the university as a whole, the undergraduate program remained stable over the past year. We had the same number of majors in 2020-2021 as we had in 2019-2020. And we're hoping that with our recruitment and retention efforts over the past year we will see an even larger number of undergraduate majors in classes next year.

This year Erin Dunn, an undergraduate student majoring in Sociology, was awarded the 2020-21 Louis and Monica Petroff Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is offered to an exceptional sociology student every other year. Erin Dunn also won the 2020-2021 Outstanding Sociology Paper Prize. She won with her entry "Theoretical Analysis of Inequality of Minooka, Illinois," which focused on patterns of social inequality in her hometown of Minooka. We had three students who received the Dr. Willie Pearson, Jr. Academic Excellence in Sociology Award: Samuel Kortkamp, Emoni Tatum, and Khadijah Thomas, all undergraduate students majoring in Sociology. And Jaylin Haley, one of our newest majors, won the 2020-21 Baer Scholarship in Sociology. This was the inaugural year of the Baer Scholarship in Sociology. Congratulations to all our scholarship and award winners!

Chris Wienke, Ph.D.
Undergraduate Program Director

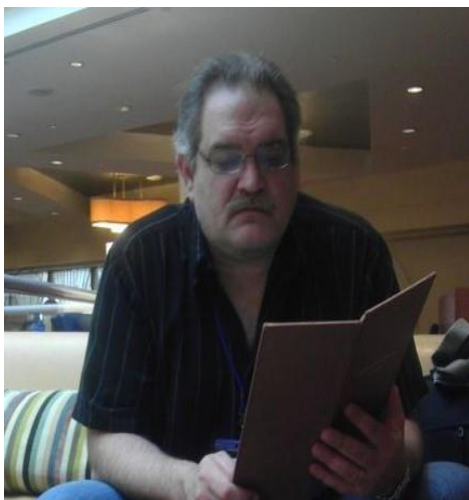
Alumni Accomplishments



Congratulations to **Dr. Melencia Johnson**, who won the Diversity and Inclusion Advocate of the Year Award at University of South Carolina Aiken. Dr. Johnson is a 2010 Ph.D. in Sociology from SIU.

Congratulations to **Dr. Derek Lehman**, who won the Outstanding Junior Faculty Award, College of Liberal and Fine Arts, at Tarleton State University for 2020-21.

Dr. Lehman received his Ph.D. in Sociology from SIU in 2018.



Congratulations to **Dr. Bob Jenkot**, who won the Coastal Carolina University Outstanding University Service Award. Dr. Jenkot received his Ph.D. in Sociology from SIU in 2005.

Please send us your accomplishments!

Faculty Highlights



Kristen Barber, Associate Professor, published in numerous outlets and was featured in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*.



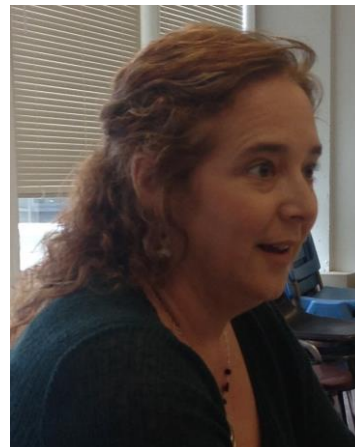
Jessica Crowe, Associate Professor, was promoted to Full Professor beginning in Fall 2021.



Bill Danaher presented at paper at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meetings.



J.-P. Reed, Associate Professor, published a book and a peer-reviewed article.



Rachel Whaley, Associate Professor, published a book chapter and presented a paper at a regional meeting.



Darren Sherkat published an article in *Social Science Quarterly*.



Chris Wienke, Associate Professor, published two book chapters.

Graduate Student Highlight



Trisha Crawshaw recently published an article in *Fat Studies* and is finishing her dissertation.

Undergraduate Student Highlight



Erin Dunn graduated in May as our top Sociology Student. She plans to become a professor.

Men & Masculinities Journal

The Department of Sociology is proud to be the home of this peer-reviewed journal. Dr. Kristen Barber is the Editor and Rick Braatz is the Managing Editor.

Men and Masculinities publishes critical masculinities scholarship from around the world. Making cutting-edge research available to readers, instructors, researchers, and policy makers, the journal also acts as a collective of international and interdisciplinary scholars who engage current debates in gender and sexuality studies as a larger field.

While the journal launched at a time when “men’s studies” was emerging, Men and Masculinities today is a feminist journal focused on pillaring the work of cutting-edge masculinities scholarship in discussion with issues of power and inequalities, and that takes an intersectional approach to the study of gender. Masculinities scholarship has moved beyond a focus on cis men and is contributing to social constructionist discussions debates on identity, politics, and the organization of our world.



Congratulations!

Daniel Baltz, PhD student, let us know that his wife, Stephanie Chambers-Baltz, gave birth to their son Ari Chambers-Baltz on 5/27/2021. Both are healthy and doing well.



Dr. Debaleena Ghosh at the Spring 2021 Graduation ceremony with Kristen Barber and Bill Danaher.

SIU SOCIOLOGY: Sociology at SIU Carbondale is a small but vibrant department with outstanding faculty and engaged students. Because SIU Carbondale is ranked as a Doctoral Research Extensive University by the Carnegie Foundation, research is highly regarded and supported here. Our faculty and students work hard on their myriad research projects but still find time to enjoy the local and regional lakes, rock climbing, hiking in the Shawnee National Forest and sampling our local wines on our Shawnee Wine Trail.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT SIU SOCIOLOGY? The Department of Sociology sincerely appreciates the generous contributions of our alumni and other friends. We value every contribution we receive, as it supports the academic progress of our talented and hard-working students! Thank You.

We encourage you to support faculty and student research as well as gift online at <http://cola.siu.edu/sociology/giving/> to make your tax-exempt contribution.