



Wisconsin Update

Department of Sociology • Fall 2020

For Sociology Alumni and Friends of the University of Wisconsin–Madison

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A virtual Justice Lab meeting

COVID-19 and the Incarcerated

The Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology join in the collective mourning of deaths of George Floyd and countless other Black people who have had their lives violently cut short by police brutality. To address issues related to racial justice and inequality, we have formed the Joint Racial Equity Task Force to take the lead in setting an agenda for positive change.

As awareness of COVID-19 hit the US in March, experts recognized that prisons and jails were doomed to become infection hot spots and advocated release of non-violent prisoners. Two of our faculty, Emeritus Professor **Pamela Oliver** and Professor **John Eason**, are at the forefront of this research.

Oliver and her group, already advocating reduction of the number of people in Dane County Jail, collected and analyzed daily reports on inmates for several months early in the pandemic. When the COVID-19 risk became clear, Oliver and others advocated for quick reduction of the jail population. Officials responded and the jail population fell nearly 40% in a few weeks, a decline about average for jails nationally. Oliver shows that most downsizing happened by taking fewer people into jail, not from accelerating release of those already there.

The UW Justice Lab, led by Eason and composed of more than a dozen grad

students, is researching COVID-19 among the incarcerated. As co-Principal Investigator for the project, Eason and his group received National Science Foundation Rapid Funding for “Estimating the Reciprocal Relationship between COVID-19 Infections of Prisoners and Staff and Infections in the Surrounding Communities.” Working with The Dane County Criminal Justice Council, the Justice Lab is researching the coordinated efforts of local officials to decrease the average daily population of the Dane County Jail in response to COVID-19. They have a data agreement to map trends in jail population and COVID-19 cases among incarcerated persons and jail staff in efforts to flatten the curve. This project will help policymakers and the public understand the extent of the reciprocal relationship of infections and deaths from COVID-19 among the incarcerated, correctional staff, and the larger community over time across the US.



Department of Sociology
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

From the Chair



I write amidst one of the greatest challenges higher education ever has faced. We all are pivoting daily, changing not only our way of teaching and administration, but changing the very way we each live.

Social justice is at the forefront of all of our minds. We join in the collective mourning of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony Robinson, Tony McDade, as

well as those since and before. We as a department are more committed than ever, through both our actions and our research, to being part of positive change. Worldwide protests against racism are making exponentially more people aware of the ongoing impact of structural racism as well as pushing for broad

change. The department is committed to remaining an agent of positive change, both on campus and beyond.

While none of the pandemic adjustments have been easy, I am continually heartened to see how our faculty, staff, and graduate students pulled together to move online with short notice—first all of our spring instruction, then our summer courses, and now the bulk of our fall courses. With special gratitude to the invaluable actions of our profoundly dedicated staff, we continue to handle all administrative functions remotely as well. Further, our caring and compassionate Board of Visitors, led by alumni Marty Preizler and Beth Garrow, has been tremendously helpful.

Never have I been more proud of this department than I have been over the past months. Our motto of Decency, Excellence, and Diversity reverberates with real meaning and a renewed urgency in our new reality. On behalf of the department, I sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are safe and well.

On, Wisconsin!

Christine Schwartz, Professor and Chair

“Forward? The Wisconsin Idea Course” and public lecture series goes virtual

The annual *Wisconsin Update* is prepared by the Department of Sociology publications committee:

Tina Hunter (editor), with Ted Babcock, Michelle Bright, Jordan Conwell, Charlotte Frasca, Kim Gonzalez, Ellen Jacobson, Alice Justice, Eunsil Oh, Toni Schulze, Erin Skarivoda, and Susan Vial.

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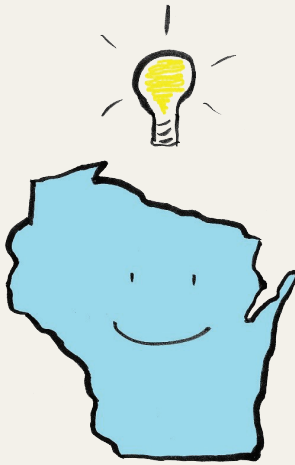
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This uniquely non-partisan topics course, *Forward? The Wisconsin Idea, Past and Present*, will be offered for a fifth fall semester, led by our first instructor, Professor **Chad Alan Goldberg**. The course is the product of an idea that blossomed during staff member **Patrick Brenzel's** volunteer work, and involves significant collaboration among UW campuses and citizens across the state. *Forward? The Wisconsin Idea, Past and Present* examines the origins of the Wisconsin Idea and its historical application across Wisconsin and beyond by engaging students and faculty from the UW System into a broader public conversation with the citizens of the state. Brenzel received significant input from a group of UW and other individuals, prominent among them Emeritus Professor **Joe Elder**. With Brenzel's retirement, the loss of his significant leadership to this course (for which he won two UW awards during the 2016-17 academic year) could have left a gap of knowledge and enthusiasm. Brenzel tells us he is both “honored and humbled” that others have taken up the torch of this remarkable course that both shares and embodies the Wisconsin Idea.

The Tuesday evening public lectures will be online for the health and safety of presenters and attendees. Lectures will be posted on the course website. Thursday morning student discussions will meet in person, following guidelines in the UW's Smart Restart plan. With a total of 26 students enrolled as of August, our impact on undergrads increases with each course offering. Enrolled students are juniors or seniors majoring in history, political science, community & environmental sociology, and sociology.

“I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the university reaches every home in the state.” UW President Charles Van Hise, 1904



Wisconsin Idea Book to Be Published in 2020

Education for Democracy: Renewing the Wisconsin Idea is slated for fall publication by the University of Wisconsin Press. Edited by Sociology Department member **Chad Alan Goldberg**, it is based on the successful outreach course and public lecture series on the Wisconsin Idea created by **Patrick Brenzel** in 2016. Brenzel received two prestigious awards in 2016–17 for his role in developing the course. Nearly every chapter in the book is based on a Wisconsin Idea public lecture given in the course from 2016 to 2018. The book includes ten essays on various aspects of the Wisconsin Idea, past and present. Goldberg says a new book about the Wisconsin Idea is needed now to encourage a “vigorous public discussion ... about the university’s purpose and role in a democratic society, the full range of ways it can and should serve the public, and the reasons it deserves robust public support,” adding that COVID-19 and protests for racial justice underscore this need. “More than ever, we need enlightened cooperation between the state university and state government to protect public health and to ensure that citizens don’t live in fear of those charged with serving and protecting them.”

Welcome to Our New Faculty



the rewards received by the winners and losers of meritocratic races.

Fabien Accominotti (right) received his PhD from Columbia University in 2015, and joins us from the London School of Economics. Accominotti’s work explores the construction of status hierarchies and how they sustain inequality in society. His latest projects use experimental designs to show how, in a variety of social settings, the quantification of merit through ratings and scores fuels inequality in



in New York this year, and will be in residence in Madison beginning in 2021.

Max Besbris (second from left) received his PhD from New York University in 2017. Besbris’s research investigates how individuals make decisions in economic markets with a focus on the housing market, particularly on how interaction with other market actors shapes individual’s economic choices and how these choices may then reproduce existing demographic and geographic inequalities. Besbris will be a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation



reduce those errors. Dykema will be an Associate Professor and Faculty Director of the UW Survey Center.

Jennifer Dykema (second from left) received her PhD in sociology from our department in 2004. She is joining us from the UW Survey Center, where she was a Distinguished Scientist and Survey Methodologist. Her research focuses on the methodologies of survey research, identifying sources of error in the process of gathering standardized measurements and developing and implementing methods to



Sam Trejo (right) received his PhD from Stanford University in 2020. His research explores how social, environmental, and genetic factors combine to shape human development and their implications for public policy. He focuses on the reciprocal relationship between education and health across the life course. Trejo will be an Assistant Professor in the La Follette School of Public Affairs and Sociology.



Kelly Ward received her PhD from the University of California-Irvine in 2019. Her research focuses on medical sociology, organizations and work, and race, class, and gender. Her dissertation involved 18 months of ethnographic data collection at an abortion clinic. She received an Anna Julia Cooper postdoctoral fellowship for 2020–21, and will begin her Assistant Professor appointment in 2021–22.

Spring 2020 Graduation

In late March, **Chancellor Rebecca Blank** announced that the spring commencement ceremonies would be altered due to COVID-19, and a virtual commencement celebration was posted in May. Likewise, department celebrations did not take place. Sociology faculty, grad students, and staff collaborated to celebrate virtually the undergrad majors and doctoral students we are proud to honor.

We developed a video filled with inspirational messages to students from our award-winning instructors and distinguished undergrad advisor, **Ellen Jacobson**. Speakers greeted the new grads and congratulated them on their dedication, hard work, resilience, and remarkable accomplishments. They also reminded students of the ways in which their training can help them understand how the various parts of society intersect with and affect one another. They left students with memorable nuggets of wisdom and sound advice. Professor **Chaeyoon Lim** said, "I hope that what we're going through together reminds us of the importance of the human connections we make." Professor **Doug Maynard** urged students, "Follow your heart."

Our ceremony for students completing PhDs traditionally includes a hooding, tributes to the new grads, and messages of gratitude from the grads, followed by a reception. Although the hooding and reception didn't occur this year, students earning a PhD were honored nonetheless. Advisors created video tributes to their students, speaking about their research projects, professional accomplishments, and post-graduation plans. Likewise, doctoral candidates created videos in which they described their experiences in the program and thanked family, friends, staff, and faculty for their support.



Jacki Hartley defends her dissertation virtually in May with Jane Collins, Leann Tigges, Alfonso Morales, Gary Green, and Michael Bell.

INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING OUR UNDERGRADUATES' INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES?

Consider donating to the Joann and Joe Elder Undergraduate Fund in Sociology (account 132751323). You'll both honor Joann AND further the educational goals of our students!

Graduate Student Awards



The National Science Foundation has awarded a 2020 Graduate Research Fellowship to graduate student **Ruby Bafu**. This significant national award places its awardees among an elite group of fellows who have gone on to distinguished careers. The fellowship will provide financial support for Bafu's research for three years.

Bafu's research examines the influence of school punishment practices on Black girls' understanding of themselves. She uses interviews with Black middle and high school girls in Dane County to contextualize their academic experiences and study how school punishment practices shape Black girls' racial identity formation processes. Her research contributes to education scholarship by interrogating school punishment practices at the intersections of race, gender, and class to expand our knowledge of Black students' sense-making processes and their academic experiences and outcomes.

Undergrad Scholarship Winners

The Sperka Scholarship, which honors the memory of former student Andrea Michelle Sperka, is awarded each year to a junior or senior who has demonstrated a commitment to working on behalf of others. Andrea, an extremely gifted young woman, tragically lost her life in Botswana following a study abroad experience; this fund was established by her parents, Carol and Michael Sperka. Two winners who are, like Andrea, dedicated to service were awarded the scholarship. **Ellen Thu Ha Hickman** is a volunteer with the Vietnam Aid Expedition, a program that provides humanitarian aid to Vietnam, and **Rachel Litchman** has been active in the Voices and Faces Project: The Stories We Tell, along with volunteer work for community organizations that address sexual violence, survivorship, and disability.

The Alfred Reschke Social Science Scholarship supports students with outstanding academic records and demonstrated financial need. This year's winners are **Mya Berry** and **Alyssa Meurer**. Berry, who is earning a certificate in educational policy studies with her sociology major, is interested in qualitative research and hopes to discover strategies that will make educational experiences less stressful for marginalized students and ensure that people of color are represented in schools and in the curriculum. Meurer credits her sociology training with helping her to recognize the structural barriers that challenge those without power. She hopes to dismantle barriers, particularly those creating inequalities in the criminal justice system. Her plans include law school and work as a public defender.

Faculty Awards

Eason Wins Exceptional Service Award

John Eason has been awarded a UW–Madison Exceptional Service Award for his dedication and service to the department and university. The award recognizes his work as a mentor to graduate students, particularly students of color, while also maintaining a high level of research and creative productivity.

Eason & Grodsky Win Vilas Awards

John Eason and **Eric Grodsky** each won Vilas awards for research. John won a Vilas Faculty Mid-Career Investigator Award in recognition of exceptional research and teaching. Eason is currently doing research on the effects of prison proliferation in rural areas of the United States. Grodsky won a Vilas Associate's Award from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education for his project focusing on the contribution of elites to growing inequality at the top of the income distribution in the United States. He is working with sociology faculty member **Christine Schwartz**, grad student **Noah Hirschl**, and **Kelly Musick** (PhD '00).

Conwell Awarded Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship

The National Academy of Education has awarded **Jordan Conwell** a Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship. Conwell's research focuses on trends and consequences of racial, social class, and gender inequality in education, particularly the multigenerational roles of families and finances in these educational processes, as inputs for children and as outputs for adults.

Conwell's study, "All in the Family: New Perspectives on the Returns to College Quality," will apply a multigenerational family perspective to research on the returns to college quality and potential racial and gender difference in those returns. The fellowship supports 30 early career scholars working in critical areas of education research.

Rogers Awarded WARF Named Professorship

Joel Rogers has been awarded a WARF named professorship. This award honors faculty who have made major contributions to the advancement of knowledge, primarily through their research endeavors, but also as a result of their teaching and service activities. Rogers, Noam Chomsky Professor of Law, Political Science, Public Affairs, and Sociology, directs COWS, the national strategy center on high-road development.

Nobles Awarded NICHD R01 Grant

Jenna Nobles was awarded a new R01 grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Her project, "Conception Failure and Pregnancy Loss in the US," studies infertility and miscarriage with georeferenced data on several million US residents from administrative records and mobile device applications that track menstrual cycles and pregnancies. The study seeks to redefine survival bias in social science research by considering the wide range of conditions that influence whether and when people become parents and pregnancies become births.

Light Awarded NIJ Grant

Mike Light was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). His project, "Unauthorized Immigration, Crime, And Recidivism: Evidence From Texas," studies how the criminality of unauthorized immigrants compares to that of legal residents or native-born citizens in a level of detail and specificity that has not been possible before, thanks to access to new, previously unstudied data. The study will also consider offense types, recidivism, and potential changes in unauthorized immigrant criminality over time, particularly under the current presidential administration.

Teaching During COVID-19

*When COVID-19 necessitated we move courses online, Assistant Professor **Katherine Jensen** was teaching two classes. Each presented challenges for distance learning. Jensen describes these challenges and how she met them.*

Introduction to International Studies is a large lecture course with hundreds of students. Asylum and Refugees is a small, advanced undergrad seminar with discussions and in-class exercises. Though their size and format differed, my driving concern was the same: how to do right by all students in the transition. As a 2020 Madison Teaching and Learning Excellence Fellow, I've learned how to enhance student learning by being attuned to the disparate goals, struggles, and perspectives students bring. While some struggled to focus amidst the pandemic, others held tight to the routine of coursework as a semblance of normalcy in their lives.

To ease the transition online and sustain student learning, I adjusted expectations, simplified requirements, expanded optional materials, and increased support. This helped hone course objectives, and pushed me to capture conceptual and substantive takeaways as clearly and succinctly as possible. I listened to student requests for more examples of concepts in the new online format, and deepened learning acquisition through more audiovisual materials than would be feasible in person.

Students were grateful for the adjustments, and they noted and appreciated the thought entailed in seeing and recognizing them as real whole people. This is something I'll carry forward into the classroom when we return.

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Department News

RETIREMENTS



Jane Collins has retired as the Frances Perkins Professor of Community & Environmental Sociology. Before joining us in 1992, Jane taught for eight years at SUNY-Binghamton. Jane's research focused on how globalization changes work relationships. She investigated across the globe, researching small Peruvian farms, large commercial farms in northeastern Brazil, apparel factories

in the US and Mexico, and US service sector work. Her research contributed to understanding specific mechanisms through which globalization undermines labor unions and weakens negotiation ability of farmers and workers. She also studied social movements that work to countervail these trends. Jane's books, and her research career more broadly, were honored with awards from ASA, the National Women's Studies Association, the Society for the Anthropology of Work, the Society for the Anthropology of North America, as well as by a UW Hilldale Award and a WARF named professorship. Jane says she is sad to leave teaching, one of the great joys of her life, but adds, "I'm already enjoying retirement, spending lots of time in Austin with my son, his wife, and my new grandchild!"



After nearly 30 years, **John Logan** has retired. From his start in 1991 as a research associate and then his 1991 hire as assistant professor, John taught computer research methods and social stratification. He devised, implemented, demonstrated, and promoted a statistical technique lacking in sociology: a survey inferential method developed directly from the structure of classical sociological

theory making it possible to quantify the constraints on each other's actions and opportunities that life in a social system entails, applying it to the marriage market in a JASA publication. He continued to pursue methodological work and developed a Stata program using his new model. He plans to continue work on the same overall project with collaborators, as well as to publish a theoretically-oriented work offering a concrete interpretation of a classical sociological idea of social structure, in which quantitative measurement of particular structures is done with two-sided models. Empirical papers on women's part-time employment and the glass ceiling are also in progress. John reports that since being stuck at home avoiding the plague, he now has more time to pursue his long-term project of perfecting a race of atomic supermen that will conquer the world. "I will show the world that I can be its Master," he commented.



Doug Maynard has retired as the Maureen T. Hallinan Professor of Sociology, Conway-Bascom Professor of Sociology, and Harold & Arlene Garfinkel Faculty Fellow. He joined us in 1979, and, while he was lured away to Indiana University in 1992, we welcomed his 2000 return. His research in Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis spanned the study of interaction in legal, medical,

survey methodological, and everyday settings where people talk and "do things with words" as well as gesture and other embodied actions. Doug received an honorary doctorate from Helsinki University in 2016, the Cooley-Mead Award in 2018, and was President of the International Society for Conversation Analysis from 2014 to 2018. He received his second Excellence in Teaching award in 2020 (the first in 1990). He has two books in the works: Harold Garfinkel: Praxis, Social Order, and Ethnomethodology's Legacies, co-edited with John Heritage; and Autism, Testing, and Diagnosis: A Commonsense Approach, a co-authored monograph with Jason Turowetz. Doug says, "I look forward to more cycling, especially with my wife. However, she's gone electric and I'm still analog, so she way beats me on the hills! And grins at me while she cruises by."



Nora Cate Schaeffer

has retired. She joined us as an Assistant Professor from the National Opinion Research Center and the University of Chicago in 1984. Early collaborations with Judith Seltzer, I-fen Lin and others in

studies of child support were followed by studies that applied conversation analytic methods to studies of recruitment phone calls for interviewing and survey interviews. These studies were developed in collaboration with Doug Maynard, Jennifer Dykema, Dana Garbarski, Bo Hee Min, and others. Nora Cate served as 2019-20 President of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. She was recognized as a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 2010 and as a Fellow of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research in 2015. Nora Cate served as Director of the UW Survey Center from 2003 to 2020, and as Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Research for the Social Sciences from 2019 to 2020. She was a member of the Committee on National Statistics, frequently serving on panels for the National Academies. Says Nora Cate, shown with her sister in Copenhagen, "I was looking forward to finishing some papers, attending Dem Sem regularly, and seeing colleagues in the halls, in between long trips to Ireland and Scandinavia, hikes all over Wisconsin, and visits with family. In our new world, I am instead expecting to spend many hours online for the next year or two. That might mean those papers really will get done and the hikes will happen!"

Celebrating 40 Years with Toni

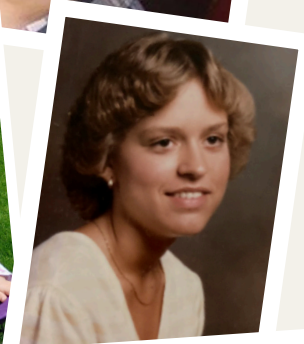
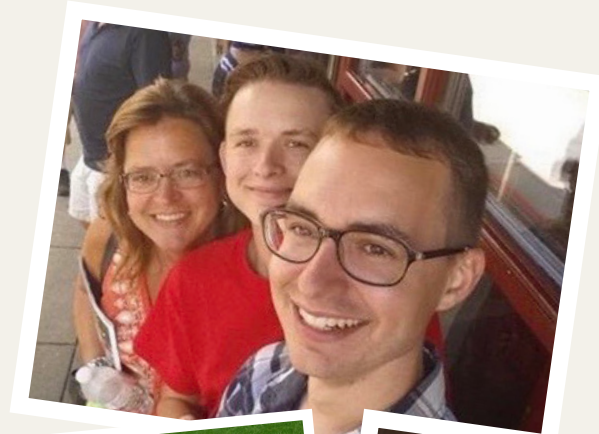
When someone learns how long **Toni Schulze** has been in Sociology, then follows up asking if Toni started in Sociology as a child, the answer is yes. As a child, Toni's favorite thing to play with her cousins and nieces was "office," where the little girls would set up their version of a workplace, stocked with office supplies and a toy typewriter. At Madison's East High, Toni enrolled in all of the business courses.

In the summer of 1980, Toni pulled a dictionary from the shelf of her parents' East Washington Avenue home. Flipping through the pages, Toni sought a word we each researched before it changed the course of our own lives. As she read the definition of "sociology" in preparation for an interview through her high school co-op business ed program, Toni did not know that her childhood career dreams would be fulfilled, and the shape of her life altered. She recalls fondly the early years when email was new, she ran up and down the stairs to help register students lined up in the lobby, and most documents were on paper and hand-delivered across campus. First hired as a typist, over the years her skills and expertise grew. Toni is our financial expert now, holding the title of Financial Specialist Senior.

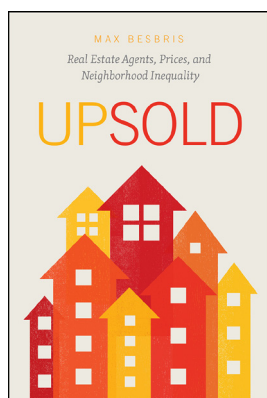
In the intervening decades since her interview, "scared to death" by our imposing institution, Toni has married (she and Fred celebrated their 35th anniversary in June), raised two sons, and is the grandmother of two granddaughters. Her advice to others embarking on their own careers? "Don't put things off that you want to do and say 'I'll do it later, or some other day,' because when you're older, other things will take priority."

Toni is one of those rarest among us, those who find their calling early, and get to fulfill their dreams through that work, work that has benefited generations of students, faculty, and staff. Says Toni, "I love what I've been doing for the past 40 years! I enjoy my co-workers; they are my friends and family."

We are fortunate to have Toni as a key member of our administrative team. As Toni continues her career, we all express our deepest gratitude for the care, competence, and dedication she directs to the success of our department!

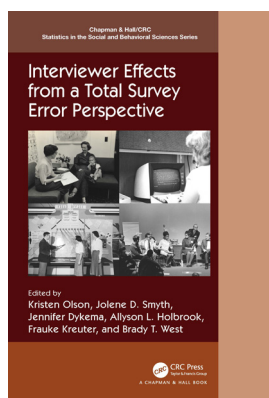


Recent Faculty Books

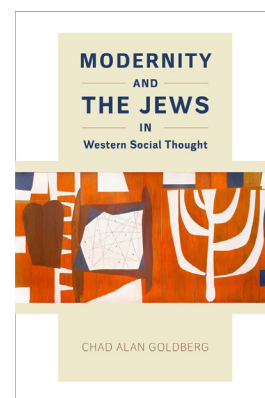


Max Besbris
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Prices, and Neighborhood
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Jennifer Dykema
*Interviewer Effects
from a Total Survey
Error Perspective*



Chad Goldberg
*Modernity and
The Jews in
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