Sociology Alumni Newsletter 2021-2023

Our Faculty

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to this special edition of our newsletter, which covers two years of events in the Department of Sociology at Ball State. Much has transpired since the summer of 2021. Our students continue to achieve remarkable success. For example, in Spring 2022, **Payton Drefcinski** and **Julia Tharp** were recognized as the department's **Outstanding Seniors**. University recognitions that year included **Payton Drefcinski**, who won the coveted **Provost's Prize. Julia Momper** and **Payton Drefcinski** were recognized as two of the **Top 100 Students at BSU.** In addition, **Payton, Ellie Haynes,** and **Julia Tharp** were awarded **Academic Honors in Writing**—a notoriously difficult achievement. This year, **Ozzie Kazarian** was awarded an **Undergraduate Honors Fellowship**; both **Ozzie** and **Lauren Latham** completed **Honors Theses**. **Ozzie** was also officially recognized as one of the **Top 100 Students** at Ball State University. **Myah Boyes** and **Miriam Barrera** were the department's **Outstanding Seniors**, and **Whitney Ragon** was a BSU **Honors in Writing Finalist**. We are also pleased to announce that the inaugural recipient of the renamed **Dr. Stephen D. Johnson and Dr. Joseph B. Tamney Scholarship** is **Giovanni Guia**, and that **Erick Sherman** won this year's **Dr. Whitney Gordon Scholarship**. All of this is in addition to the multiple internships, independent studies,

presentations (individual and collaborative), papers, capstone projects with community partners such as **Second Harvest** and the **Hancock County Drug Court**, master's theses, field studies, and other work that students undertake. These activities are crucial to ensure that our students become career-ready and, more broadly, to prepare them to embark upon the next steps of their lives as educated citizens, with purpose, direction, and civility in a polarized and contentious time.

It is, of course, the persistent dedication and excellence of our faculty that fosters the development of these students. In addition to continuing our tradition of offering **top-tier instruction** (and, in fact, serving as a national model for developing sociology curricula), our faculty have continued to be very **active scholars**. In fact, over the past two years, faculty have published **more than two dozen articles, two books, an edited volume, and a variety of other publications** on topics covering family, health, religion, policy, ethnicity, gender, methods, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and others. **Grants** written by **Dr. Mellisa Holtzman, Dr. Melinda Messineo, Dr. Richard Petts**, and **Dr. Ellen Whitehead** collectively brought **over $900,000** to Ball State from entities such as the **National Science Foundation** and the **U.S. Department of Agriculture**. Our faculty continue to serve on countless committees at every level, including internationally. The quality and quantity of **Dr. Melinda Messineo's** contributions to inclusive excellence at Ball State was recognized in 2021 when she received the **Outstanding Diversity Advocate Award**. Dr. Messineo was further honored with the **Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award** from the American Sociological Association—an especially noteworthy **national-level recognition** in our discipline. **Dr. Mellisa Holtzman's** level and quality of service to the North Central Sociological Association over time is such that she was awarded the **Aida Tomeh Distinguished Service Award** for 2021. We are especially pleased that **Mr. Greg Fehribach**, who was recently named **Chair of the United States Access Board by President Biden**, teaches a special topics course for us in the Sociology of Disability. In short, our faculty set standards of excellence for our discipline, advance our understandings, and connect discoveries to the broader world—through teaching, research, and service.

I appreciate the time that our alumni and friends take to let us know about milestones in their lives, as well. For example, **Dr. John Anderson** took a position as **Director of the Ryan Family Navigator's Program** at Ball State (while still finding time to teach an occasional **high-impact course on race and ethnicity** for our department). **Ms. Cheri Madewell** was selected by the **U.S. Department of State** for a 1-month English Language Specialist project focusing on Pride Month Conversations with Educators in Brazil. This is one of about 240 projects that the English Language Specialist Program supports each year.

Unfortunately, our newsletter also sometimes bears news of loss. We were deeply saddened by the passing of **Dr. David Maines**, an alumnus and long-time friend of our department, in spring 2022. We also feel the profound loss of **Professor Emeritus Dr. Stephen D. Johnson** this past August. Their contributions and continued influence on our department's legacy cannot be overstated, and they will be sorely missed.

This is, of course, only the tip of the iceberg; I am continually astounded at the excellence and productivity of our faculty, students, alumni, and friends. We may not be the largest department on campus, but we are without question one of the finest, and I am humbled by the honor of

serving as its Chair. I could not ask for finer colleagues. You can expect us to continue to move knowledge forward and to share it, to innovate, and to continue to adapt in a rapidly changing landscape.

I hope that you will enjoy reading more about some of the developments in our department herein. As always, should you have news to share with us, please drop me an email (clmenning@bsu.edu) or call (765-285-5977). You are always welcome to stop by NQ 222 for coffee or tea. Thank you so much for your time, attention, and support.

Best,

Chadwick L. Menning, PhD

Professor and Chair

Department of Sociology

Ball State University

Link: https://blogs.bsu.edu/csh/2023/05/03/letter-from-the-chair-of-sociology/

Remembering Steve Johnson

It is with great sadness that we at the department announce the passing of Dr. Stephen Johnson on Sunday, August 28th. He was a professor in the sociology department for over 30 years and he will be greatly missed. Starting spring of 2023 we began awarding the Johnson & Tamney Scholarship (previously known as the Tamney Scholarship). Dr. Johnson and Dr. Tamney worked closely together for many years at the University, and Dr. Johnson had funded the Tamney scholarship since 2010. We are thrilled that the Johnson family wishes to continue to fund and support students in the department of sociology!

Read more here

Link: https://twitter.com/BSU_Sociology/status/1565363372085968896?s=20&t=ZqfE1McP_JJsfo5yrRk7yw

Thank you to Linda Johnson

Linda Johnson with Giovanni Guia, this year's winner of the Dr. Stephen D. Johnson and Dr. Joseph B. Tamney Award.

Link:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CrMKDo4vign/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Sociology Solves It

Breaking barriers and bias: Dr. Melinda Messineo named "Outstanding Diversity Advocate" (September 2021)
Read more here

Link:
https://blogs.bsu.edu/csh/2021/09/30/breaking-barriers-and-bias-dr-melinda-messineo-named-outstanding-diversity-advocate/

Crowdfunding in the age of COVID-19: Dr. Ellen Whitehead uncovers practices and patterns. (April 2022)
Read more here

Link:

https://blogs.bsu.edu/csh/2022/04/07/crowdfunding-in-the-age-of-covid-19-dr-ellen-whitehead/

Good News

Dr. Mellisa Holtzman

Congratulations to Dr
Amber Urban for their
Sociological Focus! T
Menstrual Stigma and
Urban's award-winnin
Thesis competition. S
her PhD at Western M
completing her maste
State. (November 202

Read more here

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CkrSs6XPabZ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Further congratulations to Dr. Holtzman, Dr. Ellen Whitehead and Arylia Welch, currently working on her PhD at the university of Buffalo, on their publication “Adjusting Class Policies amid a Pandemic: How Lessons Learned During COVID-19 Can Help Faculty Prepare for Other Institution-Wide Crises”. (February 2023)

Link: https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/TLI/article/view/75552

These three also spoke at the Ball State 2022 Provost Faculty Summit.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CaC6yW1rYOG/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Additionally, Dr. Mellisa Holtzman was co-PI on a $50,000 Cohen Peace Grant entitled, “Sexual Violence Prevention Program for College Women in India.” (February 2023)

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CpQupDvvh7S/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Dr. Jun Xu

Congratulations on His book manuscript, *Applied Regression Modeling: Bayesian and Frequentist Analysis of Categorical and Limited Response Variables with R and Stan*, has been accepted for publication by Chapman and Hall/CRC. (May 2022)

Read more here

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd8fTVirwqP/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Dr. Fang Gong

Congratulations to Dr. Fang Gong on the acceptance of her manuscript, "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Insurance Coverage in the United States," to *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*! (February 2022)

Read more here

Link:
https://www.instagram.com/p/CZexPkKrxk9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Dr. Rachel Kraus

Dr. Kraus had her article" Examining religious/spiritual change among women with metastatic breast cancer" was featured as Article of the Month by the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion! (*October 2022)

Read more here

Link:

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14685906?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=video%20abstract%20and%20free%20access&utm_campaign=together_we_fly_October22

Dr. Richard Petts

Dr. Richard Petts, along with co-writer Dr. Daniel L. Carlson, had their article, "Has the Pandemic Increased Gender Inequality in Domestic Labor? It's Complicated," published in the *Council on Contemporary Families* in January 2023.

Additionally, popular press outlets often discuss his research. For example, *Fast Company*, a publication "written for and about the most progressive business leaders," cited his research showing how fewer than five percent of fathers take two or more weeks of paternal leave (January 2023). Another piece in *Yahoo Finance* referenced prior mention of his work in a *Fortune* article (March 2023).

Dr. Petts also was the co-recipient of the Russell Sage Foundation grant, $114,806.00, which will support the project, "Attitudes About Parental Leave-Taking for Single and Same-Gender Parents." (January 2023)

Read more here

Link: https://thesocietypages.org/ccf/2023/01/17/has-the-pandemic-increased-gender-inequality-in-domestic-labor-its-complicated/

Link: https://www.fastcompany.com/90835014/why-the-middle-of-a-leaders-story-matters-so-much?utm_source=postup&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=fast-company-executive-board&position=2&partner=newsletter&campaign_date=01192023

Link: https://finance.yahoo.com/news/family-friendly-policies-help-women-123756705.html?guccounter=1

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CoDG2_6rNe3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Dr. Melinda Messineo

Dr. Melinda Messineo has recently held the dual roles of Interim Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Professor of Sociology. Additionally, she was awarded the prestigious Ball State University Outstanding Diversity Advocate Award and was also nominated for the Women in Business Unlimited (WIBU) ATHENA Professional Leadership Award. **(**August 2021)

Dr. Melinda Messineo was awarded the Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award at the American Sociological Association annual meeting! (August 2022)

Read more here

Link: https://blogs.bsu.edu/csh/2022/01/27/celebrating-accomplishments-from-the-sociology-department/

Link: https://twitter.com/BSU_Sociology/status/1562465122890956802

Dr. Ellen Whitehead

Dr. Ellen Whitehead was recognized for her research, “Crowdfunding in the Age of Covid,” by receiving the Aspire Junior Faculty Research Grant. (February 2022)

Link: https://twitter.com/BSU_Sociology/status/1497238613742047235

Dr. Ellen Whitehead has an article published in *Sociological Focus*, “Heterogeneity in Neighborhood Social Integration: Understanding the Role of Private Support.” (April 2022)
Link: https://twitter.com/BSU_Sociology/status/1517170205767749632

Also, she and Dr. Emily Wornell were awarded a $649,997.00 AFRI Competitive Grant. (April 2022)
Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CclcsbwPZ3M/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Further congratulations to Dr. Whitehead, Dr. Mellisa Holtzman and Arylia Welch (who is currently working on her PhD at the university of Buffalo), on their publication “Adjusting Class Policies amid a Pandemic: How Lessons Learned During COVID-19 Can Help Faculty Prepare for Other Institution-Wide Crises”. (February 2023)
Link: https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/TLI/article/view/75552

Congratulations to Dr. Whitehead on receiving a Middletown Studies Fellowship! The project is entitled, “Residential Decision-Making of College Students in an Era of Increasing Political Bifurcation and Devolution of Individual Rights,” and is in collaboration with Dr. Emily Wornell at Ball State's Center for Local and State Policy. (March 2023)

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CqBbj_uPyWq/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Greg Fehribach

Congratulations to Greg Fehribach, who has recently been named as Chair of the U.S. Access Board by President Biden. Greg has been an adjunct faculty member of the department for several years, and teaches our course Sociology of Disability course. We are glad to have you as a colleague in Sociology. (Spring 2023)

Read more here

Link: Gregory S. Fehribach and Katy Kale Elected as Chair and Vice-Chair to U.S. Access Board (access-board.gov)

Gregory Fehribach

Our Alumni

Thank you for giving on One Ball State Day 2022

Sociology

Your generosity helped us raise $1342.00 for undergraduate students and student scholarships. We are grateful for your investment in our future Sociology scholars.

Thank you for Giving on One Ball State Day 2023

Sociology

Your generosity helped us raise $1520.00 for undergraduate students and student scholarships. We are grateful for your investment in our future Sociology scholars.

Community Engagement

City of Muncie

In the Spring of 2022, our Capstone students worked with the City of Muncie Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee. We are so proud of the students' efforts to survey and compile data to help the city improve its efforts to make these avenues of transportation usable for larger numbers of the community.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CdLzOmWr9l1/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CcYODUfL4h9/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Second Harvest and

Hancock County Drug Court

In the Spring of 2023, our Capstone students worked with two community partners, Second Harvest and the Hancock County Drug Court. Capstone students worked with Second Harvest, a large regional food bank that works in East Central Indiana. Second Harvest's "Big Idea Program" works to build connections with schools while also reducing food insecurity by providing food. The program provides information, resources, diapers, and hygiene supplies to community families. For this project, the students created survey instruments, administered these surveys at 30 different schools across seven different counties, and finally, synthesized the findings to support future grant applications that help keep this food program up and running as well as provide feedback on how best to serve the community.

Capstone students established baeline metrics for a program evaluation of the Hancock County's Drug Court. The focus was on the court's "problem solving" program which is a voluntary program aimed towards helping individuals charged with felony offenses involving drug possession.

Students have conducted interviews, surveys, and focus groups with the participants and synthesized the findings in order to document program successes and suggestions on ways to make the program even more effective.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/Crblj19vsJm/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CryooNoPHTL/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Student Success

Ball State Top 100 Students

Congratulations to Julia Momper and Payton Drefcinski on being selected in the 2021-2022 Top 100 Students.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CaFb2gIrUFa/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Link: https://www.bsu.edu/foundation/engagement/top-100-student-awards/top-100/past-top-100

Congratulations to Ozzie Kazarian on being selected for the 2022-2023 Top 100 Students.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/Co5KzmdvBE4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Link: https://www.bsu.edu/foundation/engagement/top-100-student-awards/top-100

Giving

With your help, so many things are possible.

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