CU Denver’s Center for Faculty Development (CFD) rolled out a new initiative in 2017-18 that aims to support ongoing faculty renewal and innovation using Communities of Practice led by faculty fellows. Among the nine fellows selected from across campus to lead these communities were Candan Duran-Aydintug and Stacey Bosick, both Associate Professors of Sociology. Dr. Duran-Aydintug is leading a faculty group that meets regularly to work on teaching and “Diving Deeper into Diversity”. Their sessions have addressed a variety of concerns including promoting awareness of cultural background among students, handling difficult discussions about privilege and inequality in the classroom, and building an equitable and inclusive classroom climate. In her fellow role, Dr. Bosick is facilitating a 5-part series for faculty centered on “Engaging with Denver”. They have been strategizing ways to increase student involvement in Denver through assignments and courses. Because of CU Denver’s unique student population, this community has given special focus to activities that allow students with work and family obligations to build social networks and experiences through engagement-rich course activities and online interactions. Both Duran-Aydintug and Bosick will continue as faculty fellows during the 2018-19 academic year.

CU Denver Sociology Professor, Jennifer Reich, was named the winner of the Pacific Sociological Association’s 2018 Distinguished Scholarship Award for her 2016 book, Calling the Shots: Why Parents Reject Vaccines (NYU Press). She received her award on March 30th at the 2018 Annual Meetings in Long Beach, California.

Assistant Professor Esther Sullivan presented her research on mobile home park evictions to a sold-out audience of over 2000 people at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House in July as part of TEDxMileHigh (see https://www.tedxmilehigh.com/speaker/esther-sullivan/ ). Sullivan’s 15-minute talk explored findings from her forthcoming book, Manufactured Insecurity (University of California Press), which will be released August 1, 2018. The book is based on ethnography conducted in closing mobile home parks in Florida and Texas, the states with the largest mobile home populations. Her work examines the social, legal, and geospatial forces that intersect to create housing insecurity in mobile home parks and addresses a fundamental sociological question: how do poor persons access and retain secure housing in the face of widespread poverty, deepening inequality, and scarce legal protection? Dr. Sullivan’s TEDx talk took a public sociology approach, delivering empirical data to a general audience, while focusing on structural social inequalities and the effects of the U.S. affordable housing crisis, reflected in the nation’s mobile home parks.
Grant-Funded Research in Sociology

Keith Guzik, Associate Professor of Sociology, along with a team of researchers from CU Denver’s Business School (Dr. Onook Oh is co-principal investigator), has received a 3-year grant from the National Science Foundation for a project examining the impact of body-worn cameras (BWC) on police organizations. The study, which employs a multi-stage research design mixing qualitative and quantitative methods, is looking to identify how BWCs enhance or pose challenges to critical operations in police organizations, such as report writing, evidence procedures, citizen complaints, officer supervision, and officer training. An initial qualitative study of Colorado police agencies implementing BWCs will lead to expert panel forums, which will subsequently inform a national survey of police departments. Beyond identifying best practices for the use of body camera technology, the research promises new theorizing on organizational adaptation to Internet-of-Things (IoT).

A collaborative study involving Assistant Professor Adam Lippert and Pennsylvania State University colleague Barrett A. Lee was recently awarded funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Their project will draw data from large-scale surveys to document the persistence of food insecurity among children in the U.S., despite government programs aimed at improving food access and nutrition. The team will also focus on homeless children and their families, who are not captured by most national surveys, but who face particularly serious developmental, health and academic consequences as a result of food insecurity. Because most knowledge about homelessness and food insecurity has come from research that is local in scope, based on shelter or clinical samples, or restricted to certain kinds of homeless youth (e.g., adolescent runaways), the team seeks to address this gap with nationally-representative data on clients of various homeless service centers. Their findings will potentially inform decisions by health professionals and policy makers about how to meet the basic needs of a disadvantaged, underserved population.

Working in conjunction with colleagues in the School of Public Affairs, Associate Professor Stacey Bosick has received a 3-year grant to evaluate the effectiveness of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion in four Colorado sites. This project, funded by The Colorado Department of Human Services – Office of Behavioral Health, considers whether offenders involved in drugs and/or prostitution are less likely to recidivate if they are diverted from the criminal justice system into counseling and other treatment programs. Dr. Bosick has secured an internal grant from CU Denver’s Office of Research Services and a small grant from the American Sociological Association to conduct a study with the Denver District Attorney’s Office. In this collaborative effort, Dr. Bosick is investigating race and ethnic disparities in the use of prosecutorial discretion by employing quantitative data along with qualitative interviews and courtroom observations. The project has resulted in opportunities for several undergraduate internships with the District Attorney’s Office as well.

News Briefs

- As part of Continuing and Professional Education at CU Denver, Sociology Professor Teresa Cooney, will offer a 5-session non-credit course entitled, The Final Act: Exploring Dying, Death & End-of-Life. The course will be held at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center each Tuesday evening from July 17 to August 14. For registration information go to: https://clas.ucdenver.edu/sociology/cpe

- The Sociology Department recently had their proposal for a 4+1 (undergraduate + 1 year MA) program approved by The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the CU Denver Graduate School. The program goes into effect Fall 2018, with one student in the first 4+1 cohort.

- The Sociology Department will celebrate its Alpha Kappa Delta initiation on May 10. The 2017-18 initiates to this prestigious international sociology honor society are: Chelsea Ackerman, Rebecca Brubaker, Brita Chipman, Melissa Collins, Cynthia Cordova, Diana Cortes, Drew Fryhoff, Miranda Krasikov, Jennifer Lammers, Melinda Nelson, Keni Ramirez, Odalys Ramos, Regina Reece, Dajana Rogulja, and Ariel Sher.
Carlos Reali, Instructor of Sociology, spent three weeks at the International College Beijing (ICB) in China over winter break, teaching Introduction to Sociology to 14 students as part of University of Colorado Denver’s joint program with China Agricultural University. His visit allowed opportunity to experience China’s architecture, festive colors, food, and history, and Carlos reports enjoying all of this, as well as the cultural exchange with his students and faculty colleagues. Carlos returns to Beijing for a month this summer to teach in ICB’s summer session.

The Winterton CU Succeed Scholarship, named and endowed by the late John Winterton, CU Denver Sociology faculty member from 2000 – 2013, was awarded to Garrett Wheeler for the 2017-18 academic year. Garrett, a first-year CU Denver student majoring in Biology with a Sociology minor, is the son of Brian and Lisa Wheeler. He attended high school in Frederick, CO, where he completed eight CU Denver courses through the CU Succeed concurrent enrollment program. Garrett’s future plans are to study medicine and specialize in orthopedics or to work in the area of genetic counseling. Congratulations Garrett and welcome to CU Denver!

MA graduate Alyssa Menard has secured a market research associate position with the FMI Corporation in Denver. FMI provides management consulting, investment banking, and research to the construction and engineering industries. Alyssa assists in the development, execution and reporting of research that is used to address problems, and develop and market products for these industries. Alyssa attributes her successful job search to the strong methodological training she received at CU Denver and the mentoring of her advisor, Adam Lippert.

Amy Kotches, a first-year MA student, received a scholarship from the Population Connection Action Fund that funded her attendance at Capitol Hill Days 2018 in Washington, D.C. in March. The 4-day event provided advocates from across the U.S. hands-on advocacy training and informational workshops addressing reproductive rights. The participants also met with their state’s U.S. senators and representatives to discuss actions and policies surrounding family planning services.

MA student Terri Register (center, in photo) was one of ten students selected nationally to participate in the Purdue University Focus Forward Fellowship Program held at Colorado State University in June 2017. The 4-day program gives female student veterans an opportunity to connect and share their experiences as soldiers and students. In addition to facilitating the creation of this unique support network, the program introduces the student participants to other women veterans who will act as formal academic and professional mentors to them.

Two December 2017 Sociology BA graduates presented honors theses in December. Alex Feldman, under the supervision of Teresa Cooney, presented “Mothers’ Marital Status at Birth: Examining its Relationship to Children’s Deviant Behavior in Adulthood”. Drew Fryhoff presented “Post 9/11 America: How Islamophobia Has Continued to Affect Muslim Americans in the United States”. His research advisor was Carlos Reali.
Sociology Faculty Assist with Pressing Campus Issues

In September, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Edelina Burciaga, visited the Vail Valley to meet with social services providers and members of the area’s surprisingly large Latino and undocumented immigrant population regarding the Trump administration’s order to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Burciaga’s research shows that DACA has helped undocumented young adults—known as Dreamers—to expand their educational and economic opportunities. Her efforts in support of Dreamers is evident on the CU Denver campus as well where she serves as faculty advisor for CU Dreamers, a campus-based group of undocumented students, and is a member of the Vice-Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion’s Undocumented Student Services Task Force. One goal of the task force is to develop a long-term strategy to expand social and financial support for undocumented students at CU-Denver, who are ineligible for federal financial aid due to their legal status.

Because of social stigmas and discrimination, sexual minorities face unique strains that heterosexually-identified individuals do not experience. These stressors can lead to negative mental and physical health outcomes for individuals and negatively impact their school and work performance. School-based services and resources can play a key role in improving LGBTQ+ students’ academic outcomes. This information has led Maren Scull, Assistant Professor Clinical Teaching Track in Sociology and Drs. Robert Allan and Troyann Gentile, faculty from the School of Education & Human Development, to initiate a collaborative project on three Colorado college campuses. Specifically, the team is using survey and in-depth interview methods to examine the stressors experienced by LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff on the Auraria and Anschutz Medical Campuses, and at the University of Colorado Boulder. They also are investigating the forms of social support and campus resources individuals draw on to cope with these stressors. Ultimately, findings from their study will inform and facilitate action that will meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ identified students, faculty and staff.

Kari Alexander, Senior Instructor in Sociology, is the faculty representative on the Oversight Committee for CU Denver’s new Partnership with the JED Foundation, a national nonprofit aimed at enhancing mental health and preventing suicide among U.S. high school and college students. As part of their Year One work of this 4-year partnership with JED, the committee has completed a self-assessment of CU Denver’s current efforts regarding campus mental health enhancement and suicide prevention. JED is currently using those data and data from their site visit to campus to develop a strategic plan for improving mental health among CU Denver students. This plan will be implemented in Years Two and Three of the partnership, and an evaluation of the efficacy of the program will be completed in Year Four.

For more information about the Sociology Department at CU Denver visit us at:
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