

UNLV



Department Newsletter

Vol. 2 — 2016

Message from the Chair, Dr. Robert Futrell

I'm very excited about this second annual edition of the UNLV Sociology Newsletter. It gives us a chance to connect with our colleagues, alumni, and friends and to describe our wide ranging contributions to the college, university, profession, and community. As chair, I get to see up close all the important work that we do as a department and I remain deeply impressed with the intellectual seriousness and practical importance of our research and teaching. I'm honored and grateful to work with such a smart, congenial, and conscientious group of people.

In the following pages you'll see evidence of our department's rich scholarship and stellar teaching. Some of our accomplishments are highlighted by faculty research and teaching awards from our professional associations, as well as some of UNLV's highest accolades. Our graduate students also have an impressive record on the awards front, garnering top university honors and scholarship support for their hard work. Equally impressive to me is our faculty and graduate students' prolific public sociology, which takes the form of media interviews, essays and blogs, report writing, and consultations. These activities demonstrate the timely and insightful quality of our research on today's major public issues.

There's been an invigorating liveliness in the department throughout the past year. Part of this energy has come from our outstanding brown bag lecture series that brought scholars from around the world to tell us about their research. We also held another very successful department open house that drew more than 200 undergraduate students together with our faculty and graduate students to build camaraderie and draw new recruits to our major. And, the growing SLICES program brought an increasing number of students into the department, as well as many



faculty and administrators asking about this new and exciting learning experience.

On personnel matters, I am very happy to report that we have added to our ranks this year. We were fortunate to hire Dr. Kerie Francis as an Assistant Professor-in-Residence. Kerie brings a wealth of teaching experience. She has stepped in to lead our required classical theory courses, created a popular Culture and Politics of Reproduction course, and she draws students to our major through her very popular introductory sociology courses. Also, our colleague and alumnus, Dr. Bo Bernhard, Executive Director of the International Gaming Institute was named the Philip Satre Chair of Gaming Studies at UNR. Yes, you read that correctly — UNR. But don't worry, Bo is not leaving UNLV. His position bridges UNLV and UNR and he's planning collaborative projects in gaming studies between the two schools. This is quite a coup, but we sort of expect the unexpected from Bo these days.

There's a lot of vital but under-acknowledged daily work needed to keep turning the department's wheels. I deeply appreciate Pam Weiss and Connie Dye's ability to manage our office so well. I'm also deeply indebted to our Executive Committee—Dr. Barb Brents, Dr. Christie Batson, and Dr. Simon Gottschalk—for their hard work and invaluable advice during the year. Likewise, our graduate representatives—Rachel MacFarlane and Jennifer Stevens—gave vital insight into graduate student needs. As I move into my second term as chair, I look forward to working with UNLV's new College of Liberal Arts Dean, Chris Heavey to build on Sociology's already solid foundation.

Finally, a great big thanks to Dr. Georgiann Davis for editing our newsletter. She somehow finds the time to put this publication together in the midst of all her other important activities. We are all grateful for it.

Happy reading!

Robert

Congratulations Faculty!

Assistant Professor Wins Teaching Award

Ranita Ray received the 2015 UNLV William Morris Award for Excellence in Teaching for her outstanding undergraduate and graduate teaching and mentorship.



Teaching and Service Learning Extraordinaire

Anna Smedley-López received the 2015 Faculty-in-Residence/Lecturer Award for Excellence in Teaching for her inspirational undergraduate teaching and mentorship. In addition to the Social Action Grant awarded by Sociologists for Women in Society, she also received support from the Nevada Regents Service Program to fund two student assistants to work under guidance with SLICES (Service Learning Initiative for Community Engagement in Sociology).



Urban Sociologist Honored by SSSI

Michael Borer received the 2015 Early-in-Career Award from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. He also delivered the 2015 George Herbert Mead Lecture during the annual convention of National Communication Association. His lecture was titled "Sensuous Knowledge and the Rise of Aesthetic Urbanism."



An Award Winning Teacher

After receiving the prestigious UNLV Foundation Distinguished Teaching Award and the Alex G. and Faye Spanos Distinguished Teaching Award last year, **Andrew Spivak** received the 2016 Regents' Teaching Award for his exceptional teaching and mentorship at UNLV.



Elected to the Publications Committee

Robert Futrell was elected to the publications committee of the Pacific Sociological Association.



Award Winning Public Sociology Author

Georgiann Davis received the 2016 Donald Light Award for the Applied or Public Practice of Medical Sociology from the Medical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association for her new book *Contesting Intersex: The Dubious Diagnosis*. She also received the 2015 Public Sociology Alumni award from the University of Illinois at Chicago where she completed her PhD in 2011. She was also elected to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer for the ASA Sexualities Section Council.



Welcome New Faculty

Kerie Frances (PhD 2015, University of Nevada, Las Vegas) officially joined our department in Fall 2016 as an Assistant Professor-in-Residence.



Congratulations Students!



Outstanding SOC Senior

Regina Shivers
Blaine Pennock

Outstanding SOC Service Award

Mariana Sarmiento-Hernandez



Outstanding Graduate Student Paper

Nicole Jenkins

Graduate Student Teaching Award

Suzanne Becker

Outstanding SOC Junior

Cassidy Lopez
Danielle Fazio

Outstanding MA Student

Alex Simmons

Outstanding PhD Student & James Frey Grad Research Scholarship

Jason Scott

Graduate Student Public SOC Award

Andrea Dassopoulos
Sarah St. John
Christina Parreira

Dr. Barb Brents, Director of Graduate Studies, pictured above and to the left with graduate student award winners. **Dr. Christie Batson**, Director of Undergraduate Studies, pictured above and to the right with undergraduate student award winners. Pictured below are the new AKD (Sociology Honor Society) undergraduate and graduate student inductees.



Congratulations Grad Students!

Jennifer Whitmer (PhD, 2015) accepted a tenure track position at California State University, Stanislaus.



Marko Salvaggio (PhD, Sept. 2016) accepted a tenure track position at Goucher College. He will defend his dissertation on September 9, 2016.



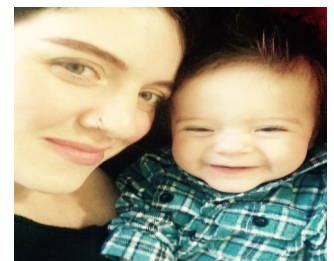
Tyler Schaffer (PhD, 2016) defended his dissertation titled, "Growing Together? Community, Culture, and Gardening in Downtown Las Vegas." He will be joining California State University, Stanislaus as a tenure track faculty member fall 2016.



Chris Conner (PhD, 2015) defended his dissertation. He currently holds a tenure track position at Washburn University. He is pictured to the left with his advisor, **Dr. David Dickens**.



Jennifer Heineman (PhD, 2016) defended her dissertation titled "Schoolgirls: Embodiment Practices Among Current and Former Sex Workers in Academia." She's currently teaching at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.



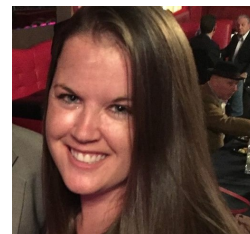
Congratulations Grad Students!

Alessandra Lanti received the Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship Award. She also obtained her Clinical Professional Counseling Intern license. She will begin counseling folks at Gender Justice Nevada, focusing on sex positive, empowerment based therapy for sex workers. She will also be doing sexual therapy in general.



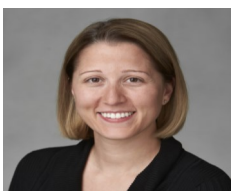
In addition to a number of DOS awards, **Jason Scott** was awarded the 2016 COLA Dean's Grant Award, the 2016-17 Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship, the 2016 Office of International Programs Study Abroad Scholarship, and second place in the GPSA Outstanding Presentation Award in the Social Science GPSA Research Forum.

Many graduate students passed their comprehensives exams, including **Genevieve Minter** (left) who passed her exam in environmental sociology and **Erick B. López** (right) who passed his exam in race and ethnicity.



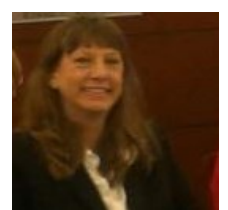
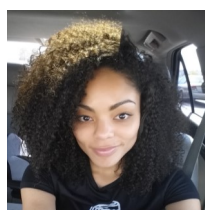
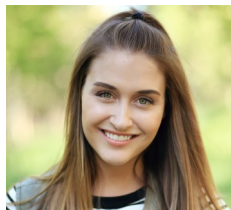
Denise Cook received the 2015 Education Debt Reduction Scholarship, with a scholarship award of \$10,000 from the Golden Key International Honour Society. She also was recognized as a Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar (Spring 2016).

Nicholas Baxter received a UNLV Foundation President's Graduate Research Fellowship. This fellowship gives Nick \$25,000 and one year for dissertation work.



Valarie Burke received Administrative Faculty of the Year Award at UNLV, a NACADA Region 9 Excellence in Advising Administrative Award, and was featured in the Chapter Officer Volunteer Spotlight for Phi Kappa Phi.

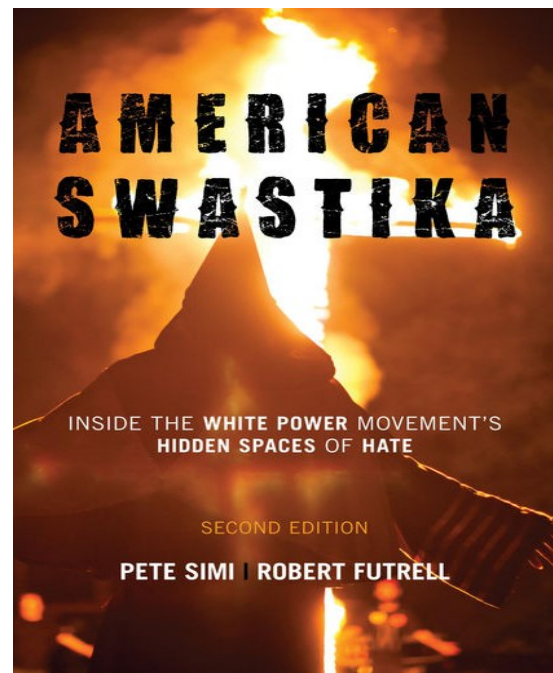
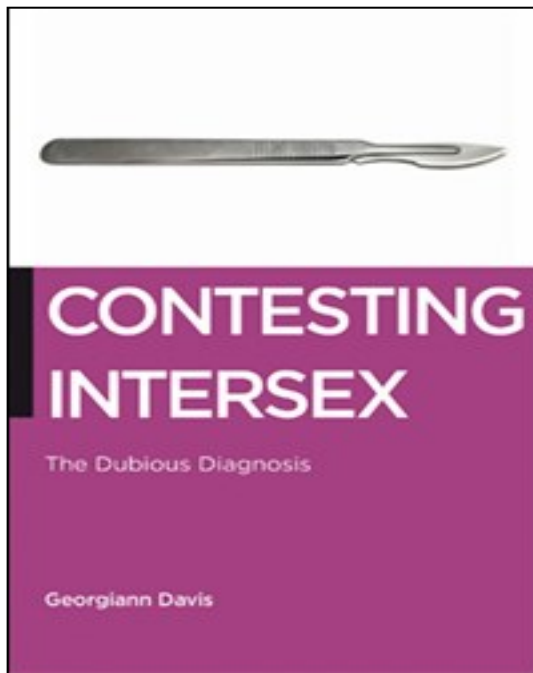
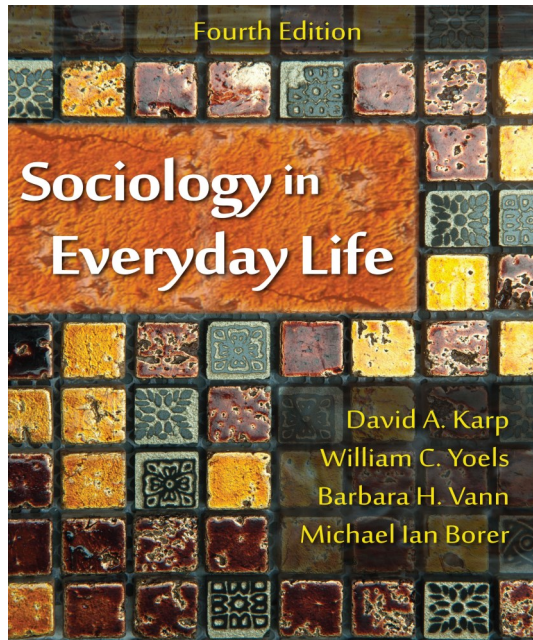
Many of our graduate students presented at conferences this past academic year. Pictured below from left to right are just a few of the students who presented: **Mad-die Evans**, **Josiah Kidwell**, **Nickie Jenkins**, **Alexander Simmons**, **Marta Soligo**, and **Jennifer Reed**.



Faculty Bookshelf

Hot off the press!

Check out these new publications by UNLV sociology faculty.



Words, Words, Words

Robert Futrell and alumnus **Pete Simi** published a second edition of *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate* (Fall 2015, Rowman & Littlefield).

Erick López and **Takashi Yamashita** published "Acculturation, Income and Vegetable Consumption Behaviors Among Latino Adults in the US: A Mediation Analysis with the Bootstrapping Technique" in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*.

Takashi Yamashita published a co-authored paper with **Erick López**, **Jennifer Stevens**, and others titled "Public Health Perspectives on Health Literacy in Older Population" in *Health Literacy Among Older Adults*.

Michael Borer published his co-authored book *Sociology in Everyday Life* (2016, Waveland Press). He also published "Consuming Craft" in *Popular Culture as Everyday Life* and "Re-sensing Las Vegas: Aesthetic Entrepreneurship and Local Urban Culture" in the *Journal of Urbanism: International Research and Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*.

Valarie Burke and co-authors published "Staff Members' Perceptions of Student Veterans' Transition at a Public Two-Year and Four Year Institution" in *Educational Research: Theory & Practice*.

Simon Gottschalk published his book *Interfacework: l'interazione simbolica nell'epoca digitale [Inter-Face-Work: Symbolic Interaction in the Digital Age]* Calimera: Edizioni Kurumuny. He also published "Playing Music" in *Popular Culture as Everyday Life*, and a book review of *Neuro: The New Brain Science and the Management of the Mind* for *Symbolic Interaction*.

Josiah Kidwell published his co-authored paper (with Dr. Steven Seiler from Tennessee Tech University), "Defining the Mobile-Digital Situation Within Perpetual Telecopresence: An Exploratory Study of the Impact of Mobile Phones on the Life-World in *Sociological Spectrum*.

Ranita Ray and **Georgiann Davis** published their co-authored paper, "Pharmacists Can't Administer Opportunity: The Role of Neuroenhancers in Educational Inequalities" in the *American Journal of Bioethics*.

Ranita Ray published her article "Exchange and Intimacy in the Inner City: Rethinking Kinship Ties of the Urban Poor" in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.

Georgiann Davis's book *Contesting Intersex: The Dubious Diagnosis* (NYU Press) was released in September 2015. Her co-authored paper "Giving Sex: Deconstructing Intersex and Trans Medicalization Practices" was published in *Gender & Society*. She also co-authored (with Sharon Preves) "Reflecting on Intersex: 25 Years of Activism, Mobilization, and Change" for *The Kaleidoscope of Gender*, 5th edition.

Jennifer Reed published a co-authored paper with UNLV alumna **Crystal Jackson** titled "Missing Rights and Misplaced Justice for Sex Workers in the United States" in *Agenda for Social Justice: Solutions 2016*. She also co-authored two encyclopedia entries with **Barb Brents** titled "Sex Work and Prostitution, Female," and "Sex Work and Prostitution, Male" for The SAGE Encyclopedia of LGBTQ Studies. Jennifer also published several book reviews for *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Barb Brents co-edited a special issue on Sex Work and Human Trafficking in *Sociological Perspectives* (with Kari Lerum), where she also wrote introduction "Sociological Perspectives on Sex Work and Human Trafficking." She also published "Neoliberalism's Market Morality and Heteroflexibility: Protectionist and Free Market Discourses in Debates for Legal Prostitution" in the journal *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*. With grad student **Jennifer Reed** and alumna **Crystal Jackson**, she co-authored "Chapter Seven: The US" in *Prostitution, Feminism, and the State: The Politics of Neo-abolitionism*. With Teela Sanders, Brents authored "The 'Victim and Offender Discourse' in the Debates and Policy on Prostitution and Sex Work" in the *Oxford Handbook of Sex Differences and Sex Offenders*. Lastly, Brents wrote Ch. 17, "Nevada's Regulated Brothels" in the *Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Prostitution*.

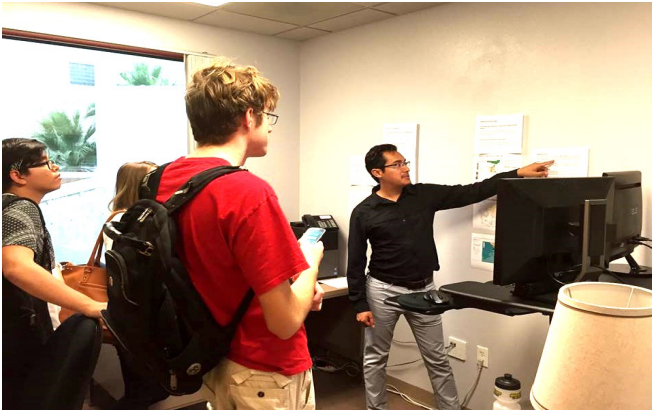
Dmitri Shalin published a number of articles this year. Including "Erving Goffman, Fateful Action, and the Las Vegas Gambling Scene" in Goffman in Las Vegas: Gambling, Fatefulness, and Risk Society—a special issue of *UNLV Gambling Research & Review* he edited. He also published "On Being Human in an Inhuman World: Remembering Vladimir Yadov" in *Global Dialogues*. In *Public Opinion Matters*, he published "From Dialogues Between Vladimir Yadov and Dmitri Shalin" in *Public Opinion Matters*. His article "George H. Mead and Lev S. Vygotsky: Embodied Sociology for the Age of Neuroscience" is forthcoming in *Society*. He also published a review of *George Herbert Mead's Concept of Society. A Critical Reconstruction* for *Contemporary Sociology*. He also reviewed *Solitary Action: Acting on Our Own in Everyday life* for the *American Journal of Sociology*.

David Dickens published "Social Marking in Memory Entrepreneurship: The Battle Over Zapata's Legacy" in *Qualitative Sociology Review* with alumnus **Tyler Schafer**.

The 2015 UNLV Sociology Open House

Students across campus stopped by the department during the 2015 Sociology Open House to learn more about sociology while enjoying pizza!

Stay tuned for the 2016 Sociology Open House!



SLICES

Service Learning Initiative for Community Engagement in Sociology

Supported by a Social Action Grant from Sociologists for Women in Society and the Nevada Regents Service Program, **SLICES** is an academically rigorous, cross-discipline, community based, leadership and knowledge project. Spending more than a year in the program, students learn about the experiences of different racial and ethnic groups. They engage in key sociological texts, scholarly and popular texts from the communities they are learning about, and the partner with local community organizations to complete a community based research project. They also learn about and practice applying a social change model of leadership. **SLICES** is led by **Dr. Anna Smedley-López**.

2016 Las Vegas Community Partners:

- Las Vegas Chapter of the National Association of 100 Black Women
- Immigrants Justice Initiative (IJI)
- Native Youth Outreach and Sierra Club (a partnership for the Gold Butte Initiative)
- UNLV Community Based Initiative (CBI)

UNLV Partners:

- Student Engagement and Diversity (Office of Service-Learning and Leadership and Civic Engagement Minor)
- Sociology Liaison Librarian
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Career Services



Public Sociology

Barb Brents made substantial public contributions this year. In addition to being interviewed for the *New York Magazine* cover story "[Is Prostitution Just Another Job?](#)" she was quoted in numerous *Las Vegas Review Journal* articles, offered insight to CNN in an article titled "[Nevada Brothels: Things to Know in Wake of Lamar Odom's Collapse](#)" as well as *Time* magazine in their piece "[Nevada's Struggling Brothels in Spotlight After Lamar Odom Incident](#)." She also appeared on Nevada Public Radio in a segment titled "[Selling Sex: Studying Nevada's Legal and Illegal Sex Industry](#)."

Christina Parreira was quoted in The Guardian in an article titled, "[Survival of the Freakiest: How Some of Nevada's Brothels are Staying Afloat](#)." She was also a guest on KNPR's segment "[Selling Sex: Studying Nevada's Legal and Illegal Sex Industry](#)" as well as KPVM TV where she discussed experiences working in a legal brothel.

Georgiann Davis appeared on the [Dr. Phil Show to discuss intersex with parents of an intersex child](#). She also was quoted in The Daily Tar Heel in an article titled, "[Intersex Conditions Pose Unique Challenges for UNC, Duke Doctors](#)." Her work was also mentioned in an NPR piece titled, "[What Does It Mean To Be Intersex?](#)", as well as in a BuzzFeed article titled "[Born In Between: Should Doctors Operate On Intersex Babies?](#)"

Erick B López appeared in videos discussing the importance of diversity in higher education in Nevada. These videos include Nevada System of Higher Education Diversity Summit Video 1 & 2, 2015.

Marta Soligo co-authored an article with Andrea Paleni titled "[AltoBrembo: Discovering the Culture of the Mountain](#)" on sustainable tourism and local communities on the 14 AM report of United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Robert Futrell was featured in *The New Yorker* in the essay "[San Bernadino and the Mechanics of a Double Life](#)." He was also featured on Inside Charlottesville on the segment "[Tragic and Racially Motivated Mass Killing in Charleston, South Carolina](#)." He was also featured on Police Promoting Unity, KCEP 99.1 in a segment titled "Racism and Law Enforcement."

Christie Batson was interviewed by the Las Vegas Review-Journal in an article titled, "[Ethiopian Community Evolved in Las Vegas Over Last Decades](#)."

Alessandra Lanti's essay "How Is Midlife Treating You?" was excerpted in Barbara Bradley Hagerty's—correspondent for NPR and the *New York Times* best-selling author—new book [Life Reimagined: The Science, Art, and Opportunity of Midlife](#). She will also read the essay on NPR during her radio series on Midlife.

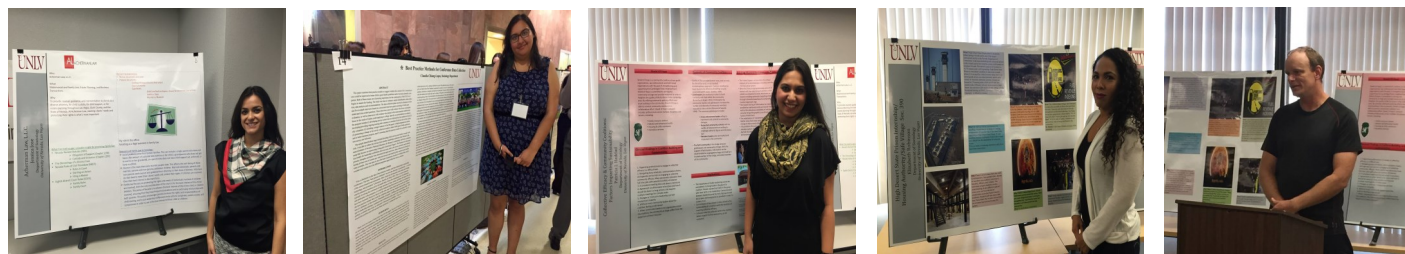
David Dickens hosted and delivered an informal talk on Las Vegas to a group of Urban Planning Scholars (faculty and students) from the University of Toronto who were conducting research on Las Vegas.

Michael Borer was quoted in the Las Vegas Review-Journal in an article titled, "[Watching Buildings Fall on the Strip Another Excuse to Party](#)."

Dmitri Shalin published "Remembering Sherri Cavan, 1938-2016" for the *UNLV Center for Democratic Culture*.

UNLV Sociology Snapshots

(below) Undergraduate students describe their internship experiences at the departments undergraduate research symposium. From left to right: **Jessica Jose**, **Claudia Chiang-Lopez**, **Patricia Haddad**, **Elizabeth Robinson**, and **Francis Lauritzen**.



(below) **Nickie Jenkins**, **Dr. Ranita Ray**, **Dr. Georgiann Davis**, and **Maddie Evans** celebrate the end a great academic year!



(below) **Faculty selfie** at the December 2015 commencement ceremony.



(left) **Dr. Michael Ian Borer**, with his newly minted PhD Student **Dr. Tyler Schaffer**!



(left) **Dr. Christie Batson** and (her daughter) with several students volunteers at the Shield of Hope and LVMPD South Central Area Command Christmas Event.



(above) **Dr. Christie Batson** and her research team conducted a four-day data collection event in the Sherman Gardens Housing Project.

UNLV Sociology Snapshots



(left) **Nicole Jenkins** celebrates her Graduate Student Paper Award with her advisor, **Dr. Ranita Ray**.



(left) **Jason Scott** celebrates his outstanding PhD Award with his advisor, **Dr. Barb Brents**.



(above) **Dr. Christie Batson** and members from the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority during a two-day DOJ workshop in Portland on “Community Collaboration and Contemporary Community Policing.”

(below) A handful of **sociology faculty** take a break from the Pacific Sociological Association meetings to enjoy dinner together.



(below) Undergraduate student **Claudia Chiang-Lopez** presenting her research on the Latino Youth Leadership Conference at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association held in Oakland.



UNLV Sociology Snapshots



(above) **Dr. Robert Futrell** stands proud alongside **Dean Dr. Chris Hudgins** and **Associate Dean Dr. Jennifer Kean** during the COLA Honors Convocation where SOC graduate student award winners **Ray MacFarlane** and **Jason Scott** were recognized.

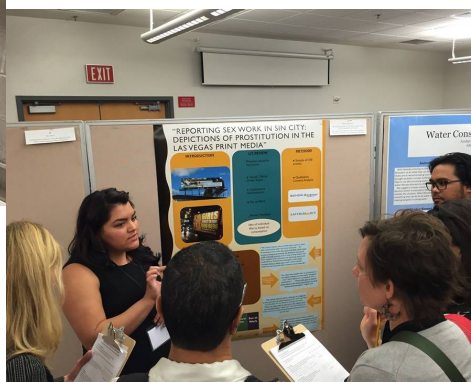


(above) Super sharp students share college success strategies with first semester freshmen in **Dr. Smedley-López's** First Year Seminar.

(below) Newly minted **Dr. Chris Conner** celebrates with his dissertation committee after a fabulous defense.



(below) **Dr. Barb Brents** and **Christina Parreira** presenting their work at the Association of American Geographers conference while alumna **Dr. Jennifer Heineman** offers listening support.



(left) Undergraduate student **Brittney Balles-teros** presenting "Reporting Sex Work in Sin City: Depictions of Prostitution in the Las Vegas Print Media."

UNLV Sociology Snapshots



(above) The Sociology Department wouldn't function without administrative assistance from **Connie Dye** (left) and **Pam Weiss** (right). Mrs. Dye recently celebrated her 15th year university anniversary, and although not new to the university, Mrs. Weiss joined our department last Fall. We are fortunate to have them in our department!

(below) **Dr. Christie Batson** was invited by the Desert Research Institute to moderate a panel on how to improve cultural inclusion in our informal education institutions (National Parks, State Parks, Science Centers, Museums, etc.) The panel had representatives from the Urban and Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Paiute Tribe of Las Vegas.



(below) This year **Dr. Ranita Ray** organized a very successful brown bag speaker series for the Department of Sociology! The series featured speakers from all around the world covering topics from white supremacy to immigration. Pictured below from left to right is alumnus **Dr. Pete Simi** (PhD, 2003, University of Nevada, Las Vegas) and **Dr. Pallavi Banerjee** (PhD, 2012, University of Illinois at Chicago). This year's lineup promises to be another great year filled with amazing speakers. Follow the Department of Sociology on Facebook to never miss a talk!



Personal Happenings

In May, **Dr. Michael Ian Borer** and his wife Katrina welcomed their second son, Julian Dean Borer.



Dr. Andrew Spivak and his wife Aurelia had their first child, Ian, who just turned six-months old in June.



Valarie Burke, and family, celebrated the birth of their first child, Jace.



Penny, a rescued French Bulldog, poses with *Contesting Intersex*, her pet parent's (**Dr. Georgiann Davis**) new book!



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