

SocioNews

ALPHA KAPPA DELTA
TCNJ
FALL 2015



Welcome to the Fall 2015 edition of the Sociology and Anthropology Department's SocioNews! Written and produced by the TCNJ chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta—the international sociology honor society—this biannual newsletter showcases students' experiences inside and outside the classroom. We hope you enjoy our newsletter.

— Chris Felton, editor

Welcome to SocioNews!

New Faculty Spotlight

Meet the department's newest faculty member, biological anthropologist Dr. Jared Beatrice!

When Dr. Beatrice arrived at Ohio University as an undergraduate, he didn't even know what anthropology was. But by the time he was a junior, he was working in a professor's anthropology lab helping her study the human skeleton. He became fascinated with this lab work and its application to examining ancient ways of life and conducting modern forensic science. Dr. Beatrice still holds this interest: he specializes in human skeletal biology and uses skeletons to study physiological stress, disease, and nutrition.

One of Dr. Beatrice's favorite things about being an anthropologist is carrying out fieldwork in foreign countries where he can immerse himself in cultural practices that are sometimes quite different from ours. Most of his fieldwork has been carried out in the southeastern Mediterranean,

specifically Albania and Greece, where he studied health and mortuary practices. He and his colleagues from Michigan State University identified a potential Vitamin C deficiency among a substantial proportion of the medieval juvenile inhabitants of Butrint, Albania, a minor port city in the Roman Empire. His dissertation work, which he plans to revisit, looked at the health status of two Byzantine communities that occupied the site of Nemea in southern Greece. In addition to other projects, he continues to investigate the biological impact of marginalization and inequality among Mexican and Central American migrants who die while attempting to cross the border into Arizona and Texas. He plans to allow students to accompany and assist him in data collection on trips to these sites.

Dr. Beatrice is excited to bring his interests to TCNJ. Next semester, he will be teaching a new course entitled "Human Osteology and Forensic Anthropology," which will focus on the anthropological study of human bones and how it applies to medico-legal cases involving human identification, trauma analysis, and human rights violations.

This course will offer opportunities for hands-on learning with bones and casts. He also wishes to offer independent courses in the hopes that students will discover their passion for these subjects just as he did as an undergraduate.

Of course, Dr. Beatrice has interests outside of anthropology as well. He grew up playing tennis and still plays on occasion. In high school and college, he was an avid rock musician and played guitar and drums in several bands, once playing with Vanilla Ice. Although he has less free time for music, he still enjoys breaking out the guitar now and then. In middle school, he was a nationally competitive gymnast, and he can still walk on his hands and do backflips (but will not grant requests for demonstrations in class).

Dr. Beatrice, we welcome you to campus, and we hope you enjoy your time here!

— Alyssa Scull

Inside this issue:

Cindy Cortez, "My Experience with the Latino Advisory Council," page 2

Gabrielle Lauda, "Trenton School Gardens Promoting a Healthier Lifestyle at Home," page 3

Meghan Finnegan, "Sociology as a Double Major," page 3

Ruby Bertola, "Watching Your Major Unfold," page 4



My Experience with the Latino Advisory Council



During my 2015 Spring semester, I initially planned to intern with the Department of Housing and Economic Development to conduct a gap analysis for Trenton City Hall. My research focused on how to improve the relationship between City Hall and the Latino population in Trenton. However, upon meeting with the city's Chief of Staff, Francis Blanco, I learned that City Hall was in the process of creating a Latino Advisory Council (L.A.C.) to the Mayor of Trenton. Because the goals of my research aligned with the goals of the L.A.C., I attended their meetings and began getting more involved with the council's Executive Board. I was then named the official intern for the council on April 28, 2015.

My first task as the intern was to interview the council's Executive Board. I was able to hear various perspectives from the Executive Board members since each person focuses on one of the five core issues: Economic

Development, Education, Faith, Public Safety and Human Services. I also interviewed community advocates from organizations such as the Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Welcome House, the Pentecostal Assembly of Christ Church and members from various civic associations in Trenton. Most of the interviews I conducted in Trenton were bilingual. As a Sociology and Spanish duo major, I was able to utilize the skills I have learned in both majors in a work setting. Through this internship, I learned to conduct qualitative interviews, gap analysis research, and evaluation research, as well as to develop models, and draft by-laws. Although my 2015 Spring semester came to an end, I am overjoyed to be continuing my work with the Latino Advisory Council.

— Cindy Cortez

Trenton School Gardens Promoting a Healthier Lifestyle at Home

Isles, a non-profit organization in Trenton, has been working at Grant Elementary School since 2008. They seek to sustain and create community gardens in Trenton, and one branch of the

organization supports school gardens in particular. Through supporting school gardens, Isles aims to provide kids with a green space and help incorporate gardening techniques into the standard curriculum. For example, students in fifth grade use gardening to learn about scientific classification as they categorize different seeds in the garden. Furthermore, Isles' assistance within school gardens seeks to expose elementary students to

different kinds of vegetables. Isles allows kids to harvest the crops and then brings them back to the classroom to eat the next week. Many students wouldn't other be exposed to Swiss chard, kale, and other leafy greens that the gardens produce. The opportunity to try new vegetables provides students with ideas for healthy eating, which may improve their eating habits at home. Who knows—maybe they'll even end up starting their own gardens!

—Gabrielle Lauda

Sociology as a Double Major

Double-majoring in Education and Sociology came with unexpected problems. Because I transferred to TCNJ, only a few of my past credits applied to my two new majors. However, I enrolled in Sociology in order to learn about social theory, community building, and social constructionism to further my skills as a teacher.

Before the semester had even begun, I struggled with scheduling classes and applying to internships. I questioned whether it was possible to apply my sociology degree to the field of education. But after taking an introductory sociology course, I was hooked. The class focused on how sociology is applicable to everyday life. For example, I studied population density and its effect on the school system. My class also analyzed how cities can be systematically designed to provide social interaction and safety for its residents. The class challenged me to connect personal experiences and observations to social theory and social structure.

After studying urban design and social interaction, I was able to connect sociology to education. My sociology classes enabled me to have a successful practicum experience in downtown Trenton and showed me how to analyze neighborhood demographics, which I applied to my practicum experience. This analysis allowed me to tailor the classroom to accommodate both English- and Spanish-speaking students and a variety of cultures. Without the knowledge gained from my sociology classes, I would be less equipped to understand the social worlds of my students.

I am fortunate enough to say that everything I have learned through sociology I have carried far beyond the TCNJ classroom. I truly hope TCNJ continues to provide a valuable sociology education to future students.

—Meghan Finnegan

Watching Your Major Unfold

I came into The College of New Jersey as an Open Options Humanity and Social Sciences “major”. As a first-year student, I felt completely lost—I didn’t know what path of study I wanted to follow, and my schedule was filled with an assortment of miscellaneous classes and mandatory language requirements as I tried to find something I liked. While I learned a lot, I did not feel that I was going in any particular direction.

After taking Sociology 101 with Dr. Bates, however, I began to realize that sociology was a subject I wanted to further explore. I felt a passion for learning more, which was not something I felt in any of my other courses. Being a Sociology major felt right, but going into my sophomore year, my classes still felt unrelated. I had taken sociology classes on everything from the environment to social work to quantitative research to sociological theory.

As a junior, though, I began to realize that these different sociology courses really are connected. I now see the bigger picture of how all these topics are connected. I felt a new excitement when I got to experience my courses building on each other. Last semester, for instance, I took Inequality, Pollution, and Environment with Dr. Bates. In this course we took on the task of observing and recording data in four different Trenton parks over the span of the semester. To my surprise, when I entered Dr. Bates Community, City, and Suburbs course this semester, the Trenton parks data reappeared. In this course, a group of us will analyze the data for a research project. We are looking at different aspects of the park data to study the usage patterns. Getting to work with the data I helped collect is a good feeling. I feel that this fluidity between courses gives me a sense of what it’s like to be a sociologist. My path of study is clearer now, and I have come to realize how many skills I have gained through my sociology course work and how they all work together.

—Ruby Bertola

ALPHA KAPPA DELTA E-BOARD

Co-presidents: Alyssa Scull and Genesis
Arteta

Vice President: Chris Felton

Secretary: Cara Bronander

Treasurer: Mary Burns

Publicity Chair: Cindy Cortez