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## SCION 13/14

By Jennifer Cantella

For the 2013-2014 academic year the Sociology-Criminal Justice Studies-Interests-Opportunities- News Group (SCION) aimed to get more involved on campus as well as serve the interests of its members. In order to do this SCION began the Fall Semester by volunteering at the East Side Bread Basket food pantry in New Castle. Members assisted in providing food packages to needy families within the New Castle area.

During the Fall Semester SCION teamed up with various groups on campus to assist with Diversity Service’s presentation of The Tunnel of Oppression. SCION members chose to represent female oppression, pressure, and negative portrayal by magazine advertisements. This presentation was titled “Disadvantage” and was comprised of various advertisement images taken from popular magazines.

SCION wrapped up the semester with a bake sale fundraiser. Goods were made by SCION members and sociology faculty members. This fundraiser raised $32 for SCION. They were also involved in the Sociology Capstone presentations as co-hosts with Alpha Kappa Delta, the Sociology Honor Society.

In the upcoming semester, SCION has many events planned. Not only will the SCION members have the opportunity to tour the Mercer State Correctional Institution, but they will also have a vote on how to donate funds. They may also have an additional fundraiser.

SCION hopes to collaborate with other groups on campus during the Spring Semester in order to host a relevant speaker or comedian. In addition to this, SCION will be co-hosting other events with Alpha Kappa Delta, such as a Career/Graduate School Night where Sociology students will have the opportunity to speak with people in the field of sociology as well as criminal justice.

SCION will also participate in safe-space training, hosted by the Diversity Services. This training is aimed at alerting people to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) issues. SCION members will be able to propose additional events during the Spring Semester.

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## Greetings from the Chair

Westminster College Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies

**Dr. Kristin Park**

We in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies (SOCJ) hope that the arrival of spring finds you well. I would like to share a few highlights about our eventful year.

With sadness we said goodbye to Dr. Gary Lilly when he retired in May after 36 years of service to Westminster College. We miss Gary’s wit and counsel, but he visits us from time to time due to his continuing work as director of institutional research and as Mercer County program director of the IM4Q project that monitors residential conditions of individuals with disabilities.

In August Dr. Rena Zito, Dr. Kristenne Robison, and 2013 SOCJ alumni Joe Ritchie and Lisi Ryding and I headed to the Big Apple to the American Sociological Association’s (ASA) Annual Meeting. Dr. Zito was accepted to and attended the very selective Sage Teaching Innovations and Professional Development Workshop. Dr. Robison presented a session during the workshop and was an invited participant in a panel on intensively involving students in research projects. I presented the design of and assessment data for role play exercises that I use in my Social Theory and Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective courses. Finally, we were very proud that Joe and Lisi were accepted into the ASA Honors program; they presented their Capstone research as well as met with graduate school representatives and hobnobbed with luminaries in the discipline.

We have been fortunate to have Ms. Nicole McElroy, an advanced doctoral student at the University of Akron, teaching our Principles of Sociology and Deviance courses this spring. Nicole’s engaged teaching and good cheer have served our students and strengthened our program.

We broke out the champagne in early February when Dr. Robison’s tenure and promotion were approved by the Board of Trustees. Dr. Robison’s innovative teaching, tireless dedication to our students, advisement of the College’s Allies group, as well as “public sociology” scholarship at the Cambridge Springs Correctional Facility and Lawrence County Probation Office, have enriched our sociology and criminal justice studies programs, Westminster and the larger region. Congratulations, Kristenne!

Last but not least, we are saddened by the news that Dr. Zito will be leaving Westminster in May to begin a faculty position at Elon University in North Carolina. We are grateful for Dr. Zito’s outstanding teaching, impressive scholarship and deep commitment to our students during her two years at Westminster. We will also miss her funky, offbeat humor. We wish Rena, her husband Jim and their daughter Mira all the best in this new chapter of their lives.

Cheers,

**Kristin Park**
Chair, Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies
Tricia Johnson, PennACE Award

Pano Constantine

Summer is that time of year when many people relax, bask in the fresh warm air, and enjoy the lack of responsibility that comes with the school year. Those three months can oftentimes be characterized by sleeping in, spending time with friends and family, and in Tricia Johnston’s case, waking up at 5 am to spend time with inmates at one of two all-women facilities in the state of Pennsylvania.

Cambridge is more of a lower-security facility that works with women who are getting ready to be released back into society. Its role is more rehabilitative than punitive, by nature. Tricia’s work there was with the re-entry program and consisted of: teaching classes, building resumes and letters of recommendation, and holding a module on relationships. For her work at the institute, she was awarded with the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Employers (PennACE) JoAnne Day Student of the Year Liberal Arts Award.

The PennACE award is a statewide award that embodies what Tricia’s internship was for her and for the inmates with whom she worked. Dr. Kristenne Robison, a professor in the Sociology and Criminal Justice department helped Tricia get the internship and worked closely as her advisor.

“Tricia is very curious, very ambitious, she’s very bright, and she’s very hardworking. I would say a faculty dream” said Robison. The praise that Dr. Robison gave to Tricia was embodied not only by the award that she received, but also by the experience that Tricia had while at the institution.

Johnston’s father was incarcerated for a period during her childhood so her experience at Cambridge was more than just about an internship. “It was a healing process for me.” With her father now deceased, it helped her to find a sense of closure to a relationship that she never fully understood during his life.

“It was interesting for me to learn what it was like from an inmate’s perspective” Johnston said. But that relationship went both ways. For Tricia, the inmates helped her understand what it was like for her father or a parent in general to live incarcerated and kept away from their children. On the flip side, Johnston helped the women there to understand what it was like to be a child with a parent in prison.

For Tricia, the internship was “life changing.”

It wasn’t just the internship that made it that way, but the relationships she formed with the women. Tricia said of her discussions with the women: “Everything they tell me, I want more.”

Johnston and Robison had different ideas about whether the internship would win the award. “I was honestly shocked. I didn’t think I would win it” said Tricia. “When I nominated Tricia, I thought she would win it because Tricia’s that good” Robison said. The unwavering faith in Tricia’s abilities is a testament to her hard work and dedication, two attributes that were key factors in the overall success of the program.

Another personality trait that was unsurprising about Johnston is her selflessly humble personality. When asked about what winning the award meant to her, she deflected the praise to others around her. “The award is a reflection of the women. They created this program. I rode on their coattails. I won the award, but really it’s for them…they deserve it more than I do.”

The PennACE award that Tricia earned goes beyond her and Dr. Robison to the entire school and specifically, the Criminal Justice Studies (CJS) program as a whole. As one of the newer programs the school has developed, this award marks a coming into its own for the program. Tricia embodies the ideals that both the CJS department and also Westminster as a whole stand for.

While the story of this award took place over one summer, its implications go beyond that to an entire department, school and more. This is a story of the openness and honesty of a person that was driven by a childhood riddled with questions. It is one of self-sacrifice and dedication to a group of people that is oftentimes labeled and stereotyped by society as criminal. It is a story of openness but also a story of closure.

The internship was more than just an internship; it was a metaphor and a doorway. It was more than just a job opportunity to Tricia. It was a way to find closure, it was a way of obtaining peace.

Dana Winkler - Internship

Dana Winkler

This past summer I spent nine weeks in Wilmington, Del., interning with a non-profit organization called UrbanPromise. Founded in 1994, their mission is to equip children and young adults through Christ with the skills necessary for academic achievement, life management, personal growth and servant leadership. One way in which this is achieved is through their free, six week long summer camps. There are four elementary camps and two middle school camps throughout Wilmington and I worked with Camp Amen, a middle school camp in Southbridge. As an intern, I taught the camp’s Bible class, went on home visits, and took the kids on field trips. More importantly, I brought them love, friendship, a haven from the violent streets, an ear to hear their struggles, and an open mind to take on the challenges that were placed before me while working and living in the inner city.

During my stay I lived in one of the UrbanPromise Staff Houses on the west side with nine other interns. The housing arrangements allowed me to develop relationships with other interns and also to have more of an understanding and impact on the city I grew to know and appreciate. UrbanPromise is much needed in Wilmington since its crime rates are among the nation’s highest. Many of those I talked to during the summer felt that violence is so rampant because of the lack of jobs in the city. Living each day with a sense of hopelessness regarding the future leads to drug use and violence.

Having both lived and worked in Wilmington has opened my eyes to the reality of poverty and the lasting effect it has on our future leaders of America – our youth. I was able to witness many sociological concepts during my internship that I learned in class such as values, symbols, norms, structural violence and different childrearing practices. I saw so many positive skills and qualities in my campers that they do not even realize they possess. This is because stereotypes, racism and poverty have put the children of Wilmington into a pine box and nailed them, their dreams, and their potential inside of it. UrbanPromise is faithfully undoing the damage the world has done, one nail at a time.
Attending conferences to present your scholarly work and network with others in your field is an important—and fun—part of faculty life. It is made all the sweeter when your students are able to enjoy the benefits of a conference with you. This April, I had the great pleasure of bringing senior Sociology majors Lydia Hartzell and Colleen Costello to the annual meeting of the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Both young scholars presented their Capstone research to other sociologists during the regular sessions of the conference (rather than to other students), an honor afforded to only the most exceptional undergraduate researchers. In addition, Colleen received a competitive NCSA Student Paper award for her research.

Lydia presented “Cyber-knowledge: A Study of the Doctor-Patient Relationship with the Increasing Influence of the Internet,” a qualitative study of how physicians maintain status when consulting with Internet-informed patients. Colleen presented “Gender and Sexual Harassment: How Hegemonic Masculinity Shapes Perceptions,” a qualitative study of how male and female workers form divergent understandings of sexual harassment of men and women. Colleen’s paper was selected as the third-place winner of the NCSA Student Paper Competition. This is an impressive accomplishment, as her paper was one of many submitted from across the north central region, which includes Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ontario, Canada. As one of the professors in her Capstone experience, I could not be prouder. The department applauds her accomplishment!

Initially, my primary reason for attending the NCSA conference was to present my own research and to lead a workshop for other sociology professors. I found in the end, though, that sharing the experience with my students was far more rewarding.

The Return of The Symposium

Dr. Kristenne Robison

It feels as if we just held our first ever criminal justice symposium, “Innovative Strategies in Criminal Justice,” but it has already been a year since its conclusion. As I reflect back on the symposium I have fond memories of engaging speakers, student networking, and, thankfully, a nearly flawless program. However, as we begin to plan for the second symposium, to be held April 9-10, 2015, I ask myself, “Are we crazy?” Planning for the first symposium took a lot of groundwork and a lot of meetings, much to the dismay of student members of the planning committee, but we pulled it off successfully.

We were fortunate to have some fantastic keynote speakers, namely Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel and Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing Mark Bergstrom. Panelists included Probation Officer Sharlee Beatty, Vice President of Renewal Inc. Steve Devlin, and Allegheny County Veteran’s Court Honorable Judge John Zottola. We also had a fantastic group of professionals who volunteered their time at the student career networking session. Westminster College senior Jennifer Cantella won our inaugural paper competition with her paper titled “Incarcerated Women’s Barriers to Education.” Thanks to all who made our first symposium a success.

As we move forward we have a new group of committed students (Allie Hamilton, Dylan Hogue, Chelsey Isler, Cassi Jannetti, John Romero, Johnny Stiglitz, and Brandon Wilkinson) and faculty involved in the planning of our second biennial symposium. Our goals are to have more student presenters and attendees from on and off campus, as well as continuing to bring in high quality speakers. Westminster College Trustee and retired Montour County District Attorney Bob Buehner will again join me as co-chair of the planning committee.

If you have suggestions for speakers please forward them to me at robisokm@westminster.edu or 724-946-6033.

Please find updated symposium information at www.westminster.edu/cjs or at our Facebook page “Westminster College Criminal Justice Symposium.”

Department Hosts Career and Graduate Study Event

Staff Writer

Sociology and criminal justice studies (SOCJ) majors participated in a Career Networking event on March 6 with Westminster College sociology and criminal justice alumni and community practitioners. The event was also hosted by the Career Center and the Sociology-Criminal Justice Studies- Interest-Opportunities and News (SCION) group.

We thank the following representatives for their advice and mentoring: Phillip Mack, dean of admissions, University of Pittsburgh’s School of Social Work; Allisyn Wolfe ’00, program director of Lawrence County Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Alexis Harris ’08, psychiatric support worker in Youngstown; Mike Dado ’02, narcotics officer in Boardman; Valerie Saluga ’99, patrol officer in Austintown; and Emily Jackson, community liaison officer at the Juvenile Probation office in Mercer.

A big thank you also to Career Center Director Jackie Meade and SOCJ Secretary Mary Pitman for their hard work in organizing this event.

Senior Survey

Dr. Rena Zito

Attending conferences to present your scholarly work and network with others in your field is an important—and fun—part of faculty life. It is made all the sweeter when your students are able to enjoy the benefits of a conference with you. This April, I had the great pleasure of bringing senior Sociology majors Lydia Hartzell and Colleen Costello to the annual meeting of the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Both young scholars presented their Capstone research to other sociologists during the regular sessions of the conference (rather than to other students), an honor afforded to only the most exceptional undergraduate researchers. In addition, Colleen received a competitive NCSA Student Paper award for her research.

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Initially, my primary reason for attending the NCSA conference was to present my own research and to lead a workshop for other sociology professors. I found in the end, though, that sharing the experience with my students was far more rewarding.
Dr. Lilly retired after the Spring Semester of 2013. In his tenure here, he has had many accomplishments and we want to thank him for his years of service and his dedication to Mother Fair. Here are some of the highlights for Dr. Lilly’s career.

Gary Lilly is a 1969 graduate of Westminster College. He returned to teach at Westminster in 1977. Since then he has served as a member of the Sociology Department. Along the way he was Chair of Political Science and Sociology for 10 years, Chair of the Faculty for three terms, and Director of Institutional Research since 1985. His work with students has included being advisor to Student Government, advisor to Alpha Kappa Delta honorary, a fraternity advisor from 1981 to 2008, women’s cross-country coach from 1989 to 2002, and head coach for cross-country from 2002 to 2007. He also helped establish the women’s track club and was the first faculty advisor for the Black Student Union. He has managed the IM4Q program for the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission since 2000. His work in the community has included membership on the Lark Enterprises Board of Directors for which he was Board President for eight years. He has also served on the Beaver-Lawrence Red Cross Board from 1998 – 2010, and chaired the New Wilmington Borough Zoning Board of Appeals for a few years. Gary and his wife Marty also a Westminster College Alumna (’69) currently reside in the Mexican War Streets District of Pittsburgh.