Sociology News

Letter from the Directors of Graduate Studies, Dr. Gary Deimling
and Dr. Brian Gran

Sociology continues to be an attractive major for Case undergraduates. We currently have 71 majors, and expect to add more when majors are declared this Spring. Last Spring, 28 Case students graduated with a sociology major. Some of them entered the work force, and a number are in graduate school in fields as diverse as Urban Studies, Medicine and Social Work, and in places as diverse as the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Arizona.

This past year, our undergraduate program was strengthened by the development of four substantive concentrations, in 1) Crime and Delinquency, 2) Health and Aging, 3) Gender, Work and Family, and 4) Inequality. The concentrations help Sociology majors to focus their selection of courses in ways that are relevant to their interests and future goals, as well as to provide them with solid grounding in a substantive area. However, Sociology majors can also graduate without specifying a concentration.

Four members of the Sociology faculty have engaged in the University’s Service Learning initiative, and several new Service Learning courses are being offered and planned in Sociology. Service Learning is an activity in which sociology can play a special role. It provides to our students a bridge to the community and opportunities to work with and learn from culturally diverse populations in the greater Cleveland metropolitan area. It offers students special opportunities both to learn and to apply sociological expertise.

In the 2004-2005 academic year, numerous undergraduate awards were received by students in the Sociology department including: James Dysart Magee Award, Schermerhorn Award, Mark Lefton Award, Stella Berkeley-Friedman Award and the Robert C. Davis Award.

Letter from the Directors of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Emilia McGucken and Dr. Dale Dannefer

The past two years have been ones of progress and growth in our doctoral program.

In Fall of 2003 we implemented a number changes in the program to streamline the requirements and focus our specializations. In addition to reducing the course work requirements (now 45 hours plus dissertation hours), students now take two comprehensive exams selected from Sociology of Aging/Gerontology, Medical Sociology and Research Methods. The program now has 29 full time students and 3 part time students, with 14 having achieved candidacy. This year promises to have an even greater number of students completing their degrees.

Katherine Abbott and Jennifer Kraly both successfully defended their Dissertations and Heather Menne, Andrew Hund, Samantha Sterns and Lisa Martin all successfully defended their Prospectuses. Several students received awards in the 2004-2005 academic year. Samantha Sterns won the Marie Haug Dissertation Award and Loren Lovegreen won the Richard Zdanis Dissertation Fellowship.
Faculty Spotlight—Dr. Brian Gran

By: Nicole Kim

Brian Gran joined the Department in fall 2002. Brian received his B.A. from DePauw University and his J.D. from Indiana University. After receiving his doctorate in Sociology from Northwestern University, he was a Robert Wood Johnson Scholar in Health Policy at Yale University.

Prior to entering law school, at a private law firm Brian had the opportunity to draft plans to establish a private pension plan for a company. Later, as an attorney, he worked for a Legal Services office in southern Illinois, where he represented individuals who were pursuing Social Security retirement pensions and disability pensions and other individuals who were pursuing claims to state and local assistance. These experiences, working on a private welfare benefit plan and representing individuals who were pursuing public benefits, led him to an interest in how different stakes influence the use of laws to distinguish between private and public social policies and their benefits.

As a lawyer, Brian also represented children and young people who needed special resources to take advantage of an appropriate education in public schools. These cases and others presented conflicts of interest between young people, their schools’ teachers and administrators, and sometimes their parents. They raised the question of what happens when parents’ and others’ interests do not coincide with a child’s interests. An attorney may be able to represent a child, but usually only in a public forum. What about a private situation?

This interest in how some social groups may be more vulnerable than others in public and private contexts prompted Brian’s comparative study of the children’s ombudsperson. Considered neither public nor private, children’s ombudspersons are often designated as independent institutions that have the goal of enhancing children’s rights. Many children’s ombudspersons have the power to enforce children’s rights in public and private domains. Among other questions, this project seeks to determine why these offices are established and whether they can successfully improve children’s life chances in public and private spheres.

Brian is married to Julie, a lawyer who patiently listens to his diatribes on the public-private dichotomy. They have two children and, consequently, rarely manage to stay awake beyond 9 pm.
Faculty Spotlight—Dr. Dale Dannefer
By: Nicole Kim

Professor Dale Dannefer joined the department in 2004. Professor Dannefer received his B.A. at Kansas State University, and began graduate school at Indiana State, where he had moved for his first job, working with troubled youth. He transferred from Indiana State to Rutgers University, drawn to Rutgers by the opportunity to study with Peter Berger. His dissertation was an analysis of the social and cultural world of vintage automobile enthusiasts which, he argues, led to several insights into processes of meaning construction and identity formation in the context of late modernity.

Dr. Dannefer did a two-year postdoc at Yale before joining the faculty of the Warner School at the University of Rochester. He credits the interdisciplinary flavor of his work to the chance to collaborate with top-flight scholars from other fields in the interdisciplinary Warner School, and also to his sabbatical opportunities. Soon after arriving at Warner, he was invited to spend a year at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Andrus Gerontology Center at USC. Later, he spent a sabbatical at the Max Plank Institute in Berlin, Germany. “These opportunities were extremely valuable,” says Dannefer, commenting on their transformative effect on his work. “Each led to the development of wonderful new colleagueships and collaborations that pushed the envelope and challenged my thinking.”

Dr. Dannefer’s interests have always been theoretical. He describes his work on the life course as clarifying the power of social forces which, he says, has often been surrendered to other disciplines. “Since aging is generally seen as a matter of individual change,” he says, “there is – especially in an individualistic society – a tendency to assume naively that the causes of age-related are also at the individual level.” This concern underlies several emphases of his work, and led him to write about the ontogenetic fallacy, the inherent asymmetry of human agency, and cumulative advantage.

Currently, Dannefer is exploring further the process of cumulative dis/advantage with two graduate students, Lynn Gannon Falletta and Robin Patterson. They are looking at trajectories of education and health inequalities over the life course.

Dannefer is also studying efforts to create “culture change” in nursing homes, replacing the “medical model” with a homelike environment, and with resident-centered practices. This research is associated with a growing movement that was born in 1997 in Rochester, N.Y. at a meeting of national leaders to which Dannefer was invited. “Initially, I had no idea – nor I think did others – as to the far-flung consequences of that meeting.” With doctoral students Rebecca Siders and Robin Patterson, he plans to explore culture change at nursing homes in the Cleveland area.

Dr. Dannefer is happily married to another sociologist, Elaine Dannefer, who is Director of Medical Education Research and Assessment at the Lerner College of Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic. They are active in a faith community, Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, and have two children, Rachel and Jon. Dr. Dannefer confesses to retaining an interest in high-performance automobiles, but says he is more interested in exploring how the dynamics between faith, politics and popular culture play out in everyday life.

Meet Dr. Dale Dannefer, one of the Sociology Department’s two newest faculty members!
Aging, Globalization and Inequality
The New Critical Gerontology
Interviewed by Debra Klocker

Recently, Dr. Dale Dannefer took the time to answer a few questions for me regarding his new book, Aging, Globalization and Inequality: The New Critical Gerontology (Baars, J., Dannefer, D., Phillipson, C., Walker, A. (Eds.) Baywood Publishing Company).

Q: What is this new book about?
A: Critical gerontology, like critical theory generally, seeks to identify and analyze the ways in which aspects of life that we take for granted and assume to be part of the natural order are in fact socially produced and constructed. Since social construction entails ongoing processes of social interaction that become habituated over time, we are not ordinarily inclined to question their legitimacy. And, since processes of social construction usually entail power differentials between individual actors and social institutions, the resulting social arrangements often do not serve the interests of the individuals who participate in them.

Q: Who is the book for?
A: It is intended for scholars and students (primarily graduate students) not only in the sociology of aging and the life course, but also in related fields of sociological inquiry such as social theory and globalization, and also in related disciplines like psychology and anthropology. Some of the contributors have expertise in policy and several of the chapters are relevant to thinking about age and social policy.

Q: What do you think are the key aspects about the book that you hope will attract your audience?
A: As noted by several leading experts who have offered praise for the volume, we have a truly stellar line-up of contributors. All are high quality thinkers and renowned experts in their areas.

A second aspect, also reflected in the line-up of authors, is its international scope. Of course, three different countries are represented among the four editors.

A third aspect is the broad range of topics. A critical approach encompasses both issues of the individual and society and there are chapters not only on political economy and macro-social processes, but also on how individuals’ health and individuals’ thinking, preferences and language all are shaped by social forces as a continuous process to which we all, as everyday actors, are largely oblivious.

Q: Have you worked with the other editors in the past?
A: Not as collaborators. This book was born out of a symposium organized by Alan Walker, who is one of the leading sociologists of age and social policy in England and in fact in all of Europe, at the International Sociological Association in Bielefeld, Germany, several years ago, at which we all presented papers. It was a very well attended session, and provocative and encouraging comments from several leading sociologists who were in the audience, notably Matilda and Jack Riley but also others such as Vern Bengston and John Henretta, encouraged us, and we soon decided to develop the work into a volume. The volume is dedicated to the memory of the Rileys, who were of course exceptionally important and influential pioneers in the sociology of age and the life course.

I would like to thank Dr. Dale Dannefer for taking the time out of his busy schedule to discuss his new book and to congratulate him on this recent publication.
School-Based Restorative Peer Justice Court: An Alternative to Traditional School Discipline—Project Update

As part of a Service Learning Course, Dr. Emilia McGucken has designed a project titled “School-Based Restorative Peer Justice: An Alternative to Traditional School Discipline”. The project has already established a close collaboration with the principle, faculty and students at Martin Luther King High School (Cleveland) as well as recruited 20 Sociology students at Case who will volunteer several hours every week to participate in the design and implementation of this project. This learning experience helps students see how some of the abstract academic principles learned in the “Delinquency and Juvenile Justice” course can translate to the real world facilitating the implementation of novel solutions to certain disciplinary problems among 11th and 12th grade students at the high school.

This program will help divert misbehaving youths from traditional high school-based disciplinary practices. Many of the defendants are first time offenders accused of fights, insubordination, failing to attend school, using abusive language, cheating, failing to comply with school rules, vandalism, bullying and other. Participatory, deliberative hearings will attempt to solve the issues involved in the misconduct. Procedural, emotional and substantive processes provide the participants in the Conference Hearing Session with a greater sense of justice and a greater level of social support for both the victim and the offender which may reduce the level of reoffending.

Upon completing the program suggested for the offender, the youth learns about accountability, about the damage to the victim, about the repercussions to others and to the community, all of which can lead to the positive interruption of a pattern of misbehavior. The program will place an emphasis on reflection and understanding the consequences of actions with the goal being to educate students, not to control them. Peer justice conference may hold the students accountable, while applying the unofficial, yet perhaps more efficient process of being called to task by his/her peers. Research evidence does find decreased recidivism rate when Restorative Justice Peer court systems are used. Additionally, an easier return of the youth to the midst of his/her school peers, and the community, is noted.

The training, mentoring and mutual collaboration in the design and implementation of the Peer Justice Project will strengthen the relationship between Case and Martin Luther King students, creating a valuable opportunity for learning about one another, for respecting human diversity, leading to a better understanding of the offender’s rule breaking behavior, resulting in more effective dispositions, in compliance, and perhaps in resolving some unattended issues.

The new alternative program addresses those who are breaking school rules in a constructive way. Restorative justice is based on responsibility and reengagement rather than on punishment. The theory and the practice of the restorative justice philosophy provides the opportunity for dialogue, reflection, insight into the circumstances of the incident, and the possibility of “making things right” by restoring relationships and enhancing the social cohesion of the school community. The offending/respondent high school students will be helped to understand the impact of their actions on others and the proceeding will attempt to enable them to become responsible, to participate in societal processes, to be aware of other people’s needs, to increase their involvement with their peers, and try to make a positive contributions to their school, family and community. The offending/respondent high school students will be introduced under Case introducing Case under-graduate and M.L.K. students to the practical application of the restorative justice methods of intervention. The types of disposition decisions made, the types of questions the panel members will ask, the procedures during the deliberation of the cases dealt with, all will be influenced by restorative justice principles.

Dr. Emilia McGucken
Becoming an Adult Today: Growing Up is Harder to Do

It takes longer to become an adult today, and that passage is more ambiguous and complicated than in the past, according to Richard A. Settersten, Jr., Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Sociology at the Case College of Arts and Sciences, and co-director of the Schubert Center for Child Development. In the eyes of the law and society, young people cross the threshold of adulthood at age 18 and 21. But in reality, few 21-year olds today would actually be considered “adult” based on the traditional markers—leaving home, finishing school, starting a job, getting married, and having children. Dr. Settersten is a member of an interdisciplinary team from the Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy, an initiative supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, that explores the changing nature of early adulthood, and the policies, programs, and institutions that address this new period in modern life where many are caught between adolescence and adulthood.

Their first major book, On the Frontier of Adulthood (University of Chicago Press, 2005), of which Dr. Settersten is lead editor, draws upon 14 different data sets to reveal just how much these transition years have changed. The results are startling: entry into adulthood takes much longer, is more ambiguous, and occurs in a far more complex and less uniform fashion than in the past. A lengthy period before adulthood, often spanning the 20s and even extending into the 30s, is now devoted to further education, job exploration, experimentation in romantic relationships, and personal development. These changes carry tremendous social and cultural significance.

For many young adults, navigating this transition phase is often possible only with family support. Accordingly, sizeable childrearing costs now occur between the ages of 18 and 34, and they have increased dramatically in the last 30 years. While middle-class families make substantial investments in their children through their 30s, the fate of young people who come from struggling or fragmented families is of great concern.

“We must also ask about the fate of young people who have been in the foster care, special education, or juvenile justice systems and are abruptly cut off from state support when they hit age 18 or 21. These young people are without any safety nets whatsoever,” notes Dr. Settersten. His work remains focused on how institutions and policies might be strengthened to more appropriately meet the needs of young people, and how the capacities of young people themselves might be strengthened so that they are better equipped to make their way.

Notes from a Post-Tenure Life: Dr. Susan Hinze

When I received “the call” in May 2004 that my tenure had been approved, I was playing at home in the sandbox with my 3-year-old, Jude. After I put down the phone, he asked: “Mommy, why are you so happy?” I tried to explain, choosing words a 3-year-old might grasp, but something wonderful had happened. His response: “Well, you are interrupting my play. Can’t you see I’m a paleontologist? And I’m busy here.” Then he shot me a reproachful glance, “You COULD help, you know.” So I picked up tools and started digging for “bones.” So much for relishing the moment!

But that moment captures the importance of perspective and social context—tenure isn’t that big a deal to folks outside our rarefied academic worlds. To Jude, his work was just as important. Maybe even more important, since finding dinosaur bones in a backyard sandbox could certainly land us an NPR interview.

I did throw a big dance party, with a Welcome to Nirvana theme, and friends and family came from near and far to help celebrate. My spouse is still convinced he’s going to hell for helping host a disco party, because apparently God hates disco. I also took a whole week of vacation in the summer without bringing work—a first, as my 16-year-old son noted. And of course, I had a post-tenure sabbatical, which was wonderful and productive even though I didn’t cross off everything on my very long To Do list. (Why do academics think that being “on leave” for one term means they’ll finish every project they ever started?)

Other than those occasions, what’s different? What’s a post-tenure life like? Most interested are my junior colleagues, here and elsewhere, who dream of life on the “other side.” They ask, with hopeful tones and sly glances, is it different? What they really want to know is whether it’s better. They desperately hope the answer is yes. My answer? Yes and no, but mostly yes.

Yes, because when I sit down to work on research, I no longer feel Damocles’ sword hanging over my head, adding additional pressure
Notes from a Post-Tenure Life: Dr. Susan Hinze (cont.)

to the research process. Without worrying about whether this article will get published in the right places and within the right time frame, I can relax and concentrate on quality. Three questions guide my research: Is it intellectually significant? Is it socially relevant? And does it have integrity? As long as I can answer yes to those questions, I’m good to go. I can kick annoying, imaginary reviewers out of my head, and not worry so much about timelines and accept-ance dates.

In the past, I had to make painful decisions on a regular basis about how much time to spend on work vs. family. I gave up a great deal of time with my sons—not to mention spouse, friends, other family, dogs, exercise, and sleep—to focus on the research. The very, very good news is that I don’t feel that tension as strongly. I still need more sleep and exercise than I get, but who doesn’t? And it is much easier to enjoy the research when it doesn’t feel like “the enemy” to my time with family.

Another way in which a post-tenure life feels different is my more frequent use of one small word: “No.” I’m discovering the enormous power of this very tiny word. In my pre-tenure life, I often felt I had little choice and said “yes” to pretty much everything I was asked to do, especially if higher-ups were asking. Now, I can often enough, but I’m spreading where to put my time and energy. I still probably don’t use the word often enough, but I’m spreading myself a little less thinly, and this is a good thing for me and for the commitments I do make.

But there are also ways in which crossing the Rubicon and experiencing life on the other side feel absolutely no different. Primarily, that’s because my day-to-day life hasn’t changed all that much. I still spend about the same amount of time prepping courses, engaging students, and working on research. One major shift is that I’ve devoted much more time and energy to committee work at the College and University levels. I have the flexibility to be involved in ways I didn’t pre-tenure, and have found that I very much enjoy the behind-the-scenes machinations of University life. In particular, as an elected member of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Executive committee, and the College Executive Committee, I’ve learned a great deal by being front and center during decision-making processes. And, as with many social situations, my sociological perspective and lens comes in quite handy when I’m sitting “at the table.”

All in all the “YES, it’s better” position outweighs the “Not so much has changed” position. That will be good news to those of you contemplating this life!

What have I been working on since tenure? Well, I handed off the Directorship of Undergraduate Studies to the very capable Drs. McGucken and Dannefer, and I’ve been happily involved in the SAGES program. I chaired the First Seminar committee for a spell, and just finished my third year in the program as a First Seminar professor. I continue the intensive advising of first-year students and the few second and third year SAGES students from earlier seminars.

In addition to the College and University level administrative positions, I’m active nationally in universities. As co-chair of the Publica-tions Committee, I helped oversee the hiring of a new editor for our major journal, Gender & Society, and the negotiation of a new contract with our publisher. It was heady stuff, and I continue my job as co-chair for another year-long term. Again, I’m surprised at how much I enjoy the daily work of administrational life.

What else? I’m data rich (quantitative and qualitative) and still writing articles on the career paths and patterns of physicians. This past fall, I was honored to give the Flora Stone Mather Spotlight Lecture on Women’s Scholarship. My lecture, “Gender Matters in Medicine: On Becoming and Being Physician” drew undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and physicians-in-training, as well as a few physicians in practice and even mothers of physicians and physicians-to-be. I enjoyed the opportunity to pull together different strands of my work for a general audience.

I published a couple of book chapters, one solo-authored using Census data from 1980-2000 to examine the changing characteristics of the U.S. young physician labor force, and another, with colleagues in medicine, on a theoretical model of decision making for physicians. I finished an Encyclopedia of Sociology entry with Dawn Aliberti, titled “The Feminization of Poverty: A Global Perspective.” But I’m most excited about my new research project. I’m still in the planning stages of a study on how children experience life in a 24/7 economy, especially those in families with nonstandard hour (evening, night and weekend shift) commitments. My participation this past Fall in the Baker-Nord Faculty Seminar on Childhoods sharpened my focus, and I’ve already had an editor express interest in a book manuscript on this subject. But there are miles to go and much data to collect and interpret first!

In short, my post-tenure life is full-speed ahead. But I’m not so busy that I can’t stop and dig for dinosaur bones in my backyard. I’m sure if Jude and I strike it rich, the Sociology department will be among the first to know. I’ll keep you posted.
Brian Gran has had the good fortune of working with Dawn Aliberti, Antje Daub, Lynn Falletta, Michael Flatt, Casey Miklowski, and Robin Patterson on a study of children’s ombudspersons over the past three years. In September 2005, Brian, Lynn and Robin traveled to Warsaw, Poland, to observe conference proceedings of the European Network of Ombudsmen for Children (ENOC) and to interview children’s ombudspersons about their offices and work. A children’s ombudsperson is an independent institution charged with monitoring and sometimes enforcing children’s rights.

The Warsaw trip was part of the overall study, which seeks to understand why these offices are established, how they use international law to enforce children’s rights, and what impacts they have on children’s welfare.

Established in 1997, the European Network of Ombudsman for Children (ENOC) is an international organization linking independent offices of children’s ombudspersons throughout Europe. ENOC currently has members from approximately twenty-five countries. ENOC’s overarching goal is to ensure that members enforce the UNCRC in their jurisdictions.

During the three-day Warsaw ENOC conference, Brian, Lynn and Robin completed over thirty in-depth interviews, primarily of children’s ombudspersons. They also interviewed officials of UNICEF, the Council of Europe, and the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child to understand relationships between independent children’s ombudsmen and non-governmental, international organizations. They also observed the entire three-day ENOC meeting session.

Rights of unaccompanied children was one central topic at the 2005 annual ENOC meeting. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, an unaccompanied child is “a person who is under 18 years of age or the legal age of majority, is separated from both parents, and is not with and being cared for by a guardian or other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for him or her.” During their meeting, ENOC members seemed to define unaccompanied children as non-citizen children living in a nation state without a caretaker. Their discussions focused on refugee children who are separated from parents or who are trafficking victims. As the ENOC dialogue proceeded, it was clear that unaccompanied children pose several challenges for children’s ombudspersons.

First, by definition, unaccompanied children do not have parents or caretakers who can act and advocate on behalf of their interests. Second, unaccompanied children often are not accorded sympathy based on their membership in socio-cultural groups that either are not well regarded or are not known in the receiving country. Third, it is unclear what rights are available to unaccompanied children. As a result, struggles sometimes ensue over what laws
do and do not apply to unaccompanied children. Unaccompanied children must rely on others to advocate for their rights and interests or they may fall through the cracks. Mr. George Moschos (2005), the Deputy Ombudsman and Head of Children’s Rights Department of Greece, made an important presentation in which he asserted that unaccompanied children deserve special protections based on the UNCRC. Norway’s and Scotland’s children’s ombudspersons stated that unaccompanied children are one of their top priorities. Many of the other children’s ombudspersons, however, did not prioritize unaccompanied children as an important national issue, and several ombudspersons indicated that their national governments were unsympathetic to unaccompanied children who are taken into custody. The course of the discussion revealed that unaccompanied children are often perceived as members of groups that are discriminated against, including Roma families and immigrants from Asia and Africa. Questions arose about the nationalities of these children, how they arrive, and what they do upon arrival in destination countries. Some become trafficking victims, some use public education and related programs, and some are hidden from legal authorities by social and religious organizations to protect them from being detained in refugee camps, moved to another country’s border where they will not be protected or returned to dangerous conditions in their home country. ENOC discussions led to an acknowledgement that unaccompanied children who pose interesting legal problems in some ENOC countries often come from other ENOC countries.

Some children’s ombudspersons admitted that their governments have challenged their independence during struggles over unaccompanied children’s welfare. Often national governments do not cooperate with each other, or with the national-level ombudsperson. In the case of child trafficking, some Eastern European countries’ ombudspersons acknowledged their nation’s status as a ‘transit state’ for trafficked children. They indicated that the brief time spent in their country, as well as the children’s mobility, made trafficked children especially difficult to protect.

Although typically charged with enforcing all children’s rights according to the UNCRC, ENOC members expressed frustration about their abilities to protect unaccompanied children. Despite ratifying the UNCRC, many national governments resist its enforcement. To protect unaccompanied children, children’s ombudspersons must struggle to use international law while their governments challenge their independence. ENOC discussions of unaccompanied children revealed that children’s ombudspersons face resistance from national socio-political actors in using an international treaty to advocate for children and their rights.

This project continues, expanding its focus to include analyses of independence of children’s ombudspersons and development of a measure of children’s rights.

Rights of unaccompanied children was one central topic at the 2005 annual ENOC meeting. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, an unaccompanied child is “a person who is under 18 years of age or the legal age of majority, is separated from both parents, and is not with and being cared for by a guardian or other adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for him or her.”
Since 1998 the program has obtained three grants from the NIH-NCI:

8/03 - 7/08—Gary Deimling (PI), “The Quality of Life of Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors”, The National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Aging (TDC) $1,125,000

8/01 – 9/03 Karen Bowman (PI), "Family Members and the Survivorship, Phase of Cancer", The National Cancer Institute (TDC) $100,000.

10/98 - 7/03 Gary Deimling (PI), "The Quality of Life of Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors", The National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Aging (TDC) $924,153.

CSRP Staff

Principal Investigator
• Gary T. Deimling, Ph.D.

Co-Principal Investigator
• Boaz Kahana, Ph.D.

Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director
• Karen F. Bowman, Ph.D.

Co-Investigators:
• Eva Kahana, Ph.D.
• Julia H. Rose, Ph.D.

Research Assistants and Fellows:
• Louis J. Wagner, B.A.
• Casey Miklowski

Cancer Survivors Research Program—Update

Under the direction of Dr. Gary Deimling, the Cancer Survivors Research Program (CSRP) is now in its eighth year studying the quality of life of older adult long-term cancer survivors. There has been little research on this group of cancer survivors because, historically, survival among older adults was relatively rare. However, advances in cancer treatment along with more general increases in longevity mean that cancer survivorship among older adults will be a significant aspect of later life for more individuals.

The research employs the general stress and coping paradigm that has long been used in research on the effects of illness. The work also combines the perspectives of extreme stress theory and identity theory to examine the effects of cancer on this uniquely vulnerable group of survivors. While only a small proportion of cancer survivors exhibit traumatic stress symptoms, the presence of sub-clinical levels of post-traumatic stress disorder needs to be addressed.

Another major theme of our work has been on how the development of the "survivor identity" buffers the individual from some of the more profound effects of cancer. While identity theory has been adapted to the study of illness, our research will be the first explicit test of identity issues and survivorship as related to long-term psychological distress. Other key aspects of the research will address the ways that personal dispositions such as coping style and health beliefs, along with proactive behaviors such as health promotion and marshalling social and health care support, can buffer cancer survivors from chronic stressors associated with cancer survivorship. The project is now collecting the 6th wave of data from our survivors sample.

Below are a list of recent publications by CSRP staff that are available in the journals cited either in print or online:

Functioning and Activity Participation Restrictions among Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors
(Cancer Investigation)

Cancer-related Worries and Psychological Distress among Older-adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors
(Psychological Distress in Later Life (Psycho-Oncology)

Coping among Older-adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors
(Psychological Distress in Later Life (Psycho-Oncology)

The Health of Older Adult Long-term Cancer Survivors
(Psychological Distress in Later Life (Psycho-Oncology)

Predictors of Medical Skepticism and Psychological Distress among Older Adult Cancer Survivors
(Journal of Psychosocial Oncology)

Family Members and Older Adults in Long-term Survivorship: What Predicted Communication during Diagnosis and Treatment. (Health Communication, under review)

A Stress Model of Cancer Survivorship in Older Long-term Survivors (Mental Health and Aging)

Health Maintenance Activities and Lay Decision-Making Support: A Comparison of Young-Old and Old-Old Long-term Cancer Survivors (Psychosocial Oncology)

Appraisal of the Cancer Experience by Older Long-term Cancer Survivors (Psycho-Oncology)

Cancer Survivorship and Psychological Distress in Later Life (Psycho-Oncology)

Racial Difference in the Health of Older-Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors (Journal of Psychosocial Oncology)

Life Threatening Illness: The Transition from Victim to Survivor (Journal of Aging and Identity)
During the past year, two new grants have been awarded to the Elderly Care Research Center, Health Care Partners in Cancer Prevention and Care of Aged and Co-Morbidity and Cancer Prevention among Older Adults.

With a $1.1 million, five-year National Cancer Institute grant, sociologists from Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University are focusing on elderly cancer patients, studying the relationship and communications among a health care trio consisting of doctors, patients and significant caregivers, like spouses and children.

The research project will contribute a new dimension to a longitudinal study on successful aging, now in its 16th year and led by Eva Kahana, Case professor of Sociology, and Kurt Stange, professor of Family Medicine.

The researchers published a proposed communications model in Patient Education and Counseling that provides the study’s framework and could potentially result in ways to improve health care for the elderly, according to Kahana.

The study will look at:
1. The content of physician communications to inform their patients of health risks, preventative health practices and advice, diagnosis and prognosis; doctor-patient relations in decision making; and emotional support, including empathy, hopefulness and respectfulness towards the patient.

2. Patients will be asked how well the communications were for the diagnosis and treatment plans; how much information was sought from the physician, media or caregiver; and the assertiveness and confidence in interacting with the doctor.

3. Significant others will be interviewed for their roles as advocate and supporter of the patient in understanding and evaluating risks, preventative advice and corrective advice provided by the doctor, as well as how much decision-making sharing takes place between the caregiver and patient.

ECRC

Student Updates

Two students employed by the Elderly Care Research Center received recognition at the 2005 Graduate Awards Ceremony at Case Western Reserve University. Samantha Stern received the Marie Haug student award of the University Center on Aging and Health presented to graduate students who have distinguished themselves in studies of aging and Loren Lovegreen received the Richard A. Zdanis Research Fellowship award.

Diana Tascar attended the 2005 summer program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) summer institute at the University of Michigan. This four week intensive program focused on longitudinal data analysis.

Loren Lovegreen has been offered a position as assistant professor for Fall 2006 in the Department of Gerontology at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Eva Kahana was elected a fellow of The Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) in 2006.
Faculty News—2004-2005

Rick Settersten’s co-edited book, *On the Frontier of Adulthood* (Chicago) was published, as were several articles, including “Toward a stronger partnership between life-course sociology and life-span psychology” in *Research on Human Development.*

Dale Dannefer has published *Aging, Globalization and Inequality: The New Critical Gerontology,* co-edited with Jan Baars, Chris Phillipson and Alan Walker. His other recent publications include “On the Shoulders of a Giant: The Gerontological Legacy of Matilda White Riley” which appeared as the lead article in *The Journal of Gerontology Social Sciences* in November (coauthored with Peter Uhlenberg, Anne Foner and Ron Abeles). Since arriving at Case two years ago, Dannefer has developed several new courses, including an action research course, “Institutional Care: Research and Reform” and a Service-Learning course based at The Intergenerational School. He published an article based on the later course, entitled “Practicing the Best of Theory: Age Integration at the Intergenerational School.”

Gary Deimling co-authored three peer-reviewed articles in *Psychology,* the premier journal in the field, including “Cancer-Related Health Worries and Psychological Distress among Older Adult, Long-Term Cancer Survivors” and “Coping among Older-Adult, Long-Term Cancer Survivors.”

Emilia McGucken launched a research project, “Healthcare Professionals’ Attitudes and Beliefs about Pregnant Substance Abusing Women,” with support through a small grant from the ACES project and University Hospitals.

Brian Gran served as the lead author on the article “The Consequences of Social Movement Actions and Preconditions: Opinions of Immigrant Assimilation among Local Polity Members in France,” which appeared in Sociological Focus. He was also Visiting Fellow of the British Academy, where he conducted research on the impact of children’s ombudspersons on children’s rights and interests, conducting interviews with ombudspersons from across Western and Eastern Europe, Africa and officials of non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF. An important component of this research is development of the Children’s Rights Index (CRI), which is already receiving international attention.

Eva Kahana completed her co-authored three peer-reviewed articles in *Psycho-Oncology,* the premier journal in the field, including “Cancer-Related Health Worries and Psychological Distress among Older Adult, Long-Term Cancer Survivors.”

In addition to the publications highlighted in her essay on page 7, Susan W. Hinze has been presenting new work at conferences.

Along with current graduate student Noah Webster and former graduate student (and current Assistant Professor at Bates College) Heidi Taylor Chirayath, Dr. Hinze presented a paper titled “Constructing Deserving Patients in the Emergency Room: A Sociological Perspective on Abuse Potential and Prescription Decisions.” At the ASA meetings in Philadelphia, PA, she presented a paper on The House(spouse) Bonus with graduate student Mike Schaefer and former faculty member Dr. Eleanor Stoller. She just returned from the SWS conference in Puerto Rico, and will be traveling to New Orleans in March for the Southern Sociological Society meetings.
**Student News**

Michael Schaefer is the proud father of Maxwell David, born on March 18, 2005.

Karla Feldman is the proud mother of Ethan Cole Feldman, born on March 5, 2005.

**Publications**

The Sociology Department has had a number of students who have published articles in the 2004-2005 academic year including: Loren Lovegreen, Gul Seckin, Samantha Sterns, Dawn Alliberti, Michael Schaefer, Lynn Gannon, Robin Patterson and Louis Wagner.

**Upcoming Events**

On March 6, the Department of Sociology will host its Annual Open House from 4 to 5:30 pm, in Mather Memorial 201. Free food and drink! Be there!

The Sociology Club is busy planning for a special event, including Anthropology and Psychology students. Date and place will be announced.

**Congratulations AKD Inductees**


**Spring 2006 Initiation**

We have a date, a place, good company and good food. The annual Alpha Kappa Delta Initiation Ceremony/Banquet will be held on 4/24/06, in room 201. Following in our tradition, will also have three Senior Honors Theses presentations. The promise to be quite an evening! Sociology majors will receive a letter inviting those who qualify to apply for AKD membership. Watch your mail with anticipation!

**Spring Colloquia**

March 6. Professor Nick King, Bioethics. Professor King joined the Case Bioethics Department this fall. Professor King is a historian who has published on ethical debates of biodefense programs, among other areas.

March 8. Professor Dale Dannefer and Robin Patterson.

March 28. Dr. Warren Zanes, Vice President of the Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame. Dr. Zanes has a PhD in Visual and Cultural Studies and is a vice president of the Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame. He is a former member of the band, Del Fuegos.

April 11. Professor Debi Street, University of Buffalo. Professor Street is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Buffalo. She conducts comparative research on the welfare state, particularly social policies affecting older individuals.

**Sociology Staff**

Michelle Rizzuto has been with the Sociology Department for 7 years. Michelle lives in Parma Hts. with her husband Michael and their two kids Sam and Caroline (both very cute!). Michelle earned a B.A. in Interpersonal Communications from Bowling Green State University.

Debra Klocker has just recently joined the Sociology Department in November. Debra lives in Euclid with her husband Kevin and their daughter Emma, who is now almost 8 month old.

Debra received her Bachelors in Marketing from Kent State University. Her past work experience includes Adelphia Communications, where she started as the department assistant and then became a Marketing Coordinator specializing in Video Acquisition. Her hobbies include golfing and scrapbooking.
Student Spotlights

The Sociology Department welcomed four new students into the Ph.D. program in the 2005-2006 academic year:

**Rebecca Siders** graduated from Penn State University in Sharon, PA with a major in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Gerontology. She was born and raised in the Philippine Islands, adopted by a missionary family. Her family moved to the U.S. in 1986. She has lived in Chillicothe and London, Ohio, Wichita, Kansas, Sharon & Greenville, Pennsylvania and is now living in Brunswick, OH. Her parents now live in Thomasville, NC and has 3 Sisters live in Myrtle Beach, Virginia Beach, and Charlottesville, VA, and 1 brother in the Army, Fort Bragg, NC.

Rebecca worked at St. Paul Homes Health Center, Greenville, PA for 10 yrs. And her hobbies and interests include camping, hiking, canoeing, biking, etc. (outdoors stuff) Enjoy plays, theater, ballet, symphony...basically, the Arts. Oh, and she is a die-hard STEELER fan!

**Christine Schneider** came to Case with a BA from Baldwin-Wallace college where she majored in Sociology and minored in Spanish. Christine is a native "Ohioan" but is enjoying the experience of downtown Cleveland for the first time. My outside of academia interests are fishing (where she does her best research thinking...) and golf (where she usually makes her mom laugh by practicing her presentations...). All in all she is really excited to be a part of the department community and hopes to contribute back to the department what they have shared with her thus far.

**Robert Peterson** is originally from Columbus, Georgia. He received his BA in Sociology from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Robert’s interests consist of medical sociology, gender issues, health and illness, lifecourse, and social inequalities. He is excited about the new semester and enjoys his colleagues and professors.

**Dana Blocker** has her masters in social work and has worked at Case for 3 years. She is the assistant director of the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women and the major concentration of her job is women’s health. Dana is a native Clevelander and currently lives in University Heights with her husband. She loves to run, bike and travel and is looking forward to going to Amsterdam in March to learn more about women’s health care.