



South Carolina Sociological Association

Spring 2021 Issue

Greetings from the SCSA President



Greetings and a happy spring season from all of us at SCSA! I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during these rapidly changing times.

I have a lot of information I'd like to share with you in this first newsletter of 2021.

First, with the pandemic continuing and the many uncertainties surrounding things like event planning, I have decided to implement a formal conference programming committee for next year's SCSA meeting in February. Out of necessity, it will likely be the first of its kind in the history of SCSA. Jessica Doucet at Francis Marion University will lead the way as program chair and Vinetta Witt at Newberry College will co-chair. We are looking for folks to be a part of this inaugural planning committee to help develop the Call for Proposals and recruit membership into SCSA over the coming months. If you would like to participate, please reach out to me at scsociology@protonmail.com.

This news about conference programming brings me to a related item of information. I am happy to announce that University of South Carolina Upstate has generously offered to host the SCSA meeting next year on **February 25-26, 2022**. Many thanks to Lizabeth Zach and her Upstate sociology colleagues for putting forth a prompt effort to schedule those dates! I have chosen the conference theme, *Paying Sociology Forward: Lessons We Want Others to (Un)Learn*, with the hope of attracting diverse presentations and stimulating provocative discussion.

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We held this year's SCSA meeting at Hickory Knob State Park and Resort in McCormick, South Carolina, February 12-13. For the most part, the meeting went well. Unfortunately, the outdoor reception did not work out as planned. I also underestimated the technical and bureaucratic challenges of holding a business meeting with both in-person and virtual attendees. On a brighter note, we had a full program of presentations at the meeting, which consisted of a keynote speaker, three thematic session presentations, a pandemic response panel, and three research session presentations.

At the business meeting, we elected Todd Couch and Jessica Doucet to positions of Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. We also elected Dan Harrison, Nancy Rhoads, and Vinetta Witt to at-large positions on the Executive Committee. Congratulations to all of you! Many thanks for your ongoing commitment to SCSA. I also want to acknowledge outgoing members of the SCSA Executive Committee for past service. Jessica Burke served consecutive two-year terms as Secretary from 2016 – 2020. Cassius Hossfeld completed his one-year term as at-large member. Thank you Jessica and Cassius!

The business meeting generated productive ideas already in motion. We discussed sponsoring an undergraduate paper competition and carried through with the plan. Details about the competition and winner and runner-up appear in this newsletter. I wish to extend special thanks to Carol Black at University South Carolina Sumter Palmetto College for leading the way in this effort to recognize the hard work and talent of undergraduate students in South Carolina.

Finally, I feel proud to promote the teaching, research, and practice of sociology throughout the state of South Carolina. Thank you for the dedication and talent you bring to that exciting journey. If you have any questions about SCSA, please don't hesitate to contact anyone of us on the SCSA Executive Committee.

Rusty

Russell (Rusty) Ward, Ph.D.
President, South Carolina Sociological Association (SCSA)

SCSA Executive Committee

President: Rusty Ward, Francis Marion University
President-Elect: Deborah Cohan, University of South Carolina-Beaufort
Secretary: Todd Couch, Francis Marion University
Treasurer: Jessica Doucet, Francis Marion University

Members-at-large:
Daniel Harrison, Lander University
Nancy Rhoads, Allen University
Vinetta Witt, Newberry College

Teaching Corner

Study Teams for Metacognitive Growth in Sociology



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Tri-County
Technical
College

Getting students to study early, often – or sometimes at all – is a challenge for teachers. To address this problem, I devised an approach using study teams.

The approach works by incentivizing students to engage in a continuous process of study with a partner, or with two in case of an odd number of students in a class. (It is advisable to minimize the number of partners because of logistical problems of finding a time to meet, which multiply exponentially with the number of partners involved.)

Students are assigned randomly to teams; they are not allowed to choose their partners. The logic behind this is threefold. First, research suggests that students who have an organic relationship with each other often socialize too much to the exclusion of working (although a modicum of socializing can usefully build rapport between team members and provide a needed study break or reset). Second, pairing students randomly increases the likelihood of demographic or personality diversity between team members, which in turn helps to stimulate metacognitive growth. Often, students do not know what they do not know, and starting from different backgrounds or perspectives helps students to problematize the content at hand; conversely, if students think too much alike, they may not raise needed

questions born of divergent interpretations. Although students may be placed into matched pairs (a man with a woman, a Caucasian with a person of color, etc.), demographic skew in most classrooms limits this possibility, and the beauty of randomization is that it controls untoward effects of both observed or observable traits and unobservable traits. Finally, randomization makes it more likely that students will be paired *across* ability and motivational levels. The most important outcome of the approach is to raise class averages and stimulate improvement that is as broad as possible (ideally universal), not just raise individual scores. If students choose their partners, students will tend to self-group with students of similar efficacy, and the rich may get richer and the poor little richer. In addition, when a team bridges disparate efficacy levels, the stronger partner may teach the weaker partner outside of class and in a different way than the professor had in class, with attendant learning gains for the less effective students owing to multiple angles of attack and age-based or cultural affinity with other students who speak the same ‘language,’ and in the process of verbalizing his/her understanding, the stronger student may reinforce it, or realize an epiphany (this happens with teachers too, of course).

If each student on a two-person team (or any two on a three-person team) achieves a passing score, both are granted a bonus of five points on each exam on which that occurs. I emphasize to students that the bulk of the points gained come from the process itself, not from the bonus. The bonus serves as a sweetener or

instructor match, but upon using this approach, I saw that raw scores of each class were elevated between 12 and 15 points (i.e., excluding the bonus). It ties extrinsic motivation to a change in behavior that may eventually produce intrinsic satisfaction as well as higher achievement as new habits are formed and attitudinal change occurs. Some students lament being stuck with an unresponsive and unreliable partner, which can be addressed by the instructor if it is persistent, but this is a pitfall of all group work. Moreover, the student is not penalized if they have such a partner; instead, they simply are not awarded the bonus, and a powerful selfish motivation to improve the other’s outcomes as well as one’s own is leveraged. I tell students in such cases, “Make them better, lift them up” and such often occurs. In order to qualify for the bonus, each student must submit a form each week stating the date, time, and location of their joint study session, and they must have at least one per week for each test unit. Also, they must indicate a connection they made with the material (which could be an extensive reflection, an anecdote based on personal experience related to a concept or topic, using the sociological imagination to see what they had not seen before in daily life, or a thought about a current event, for example) and they should discuss any difficulties they had faced in comprehending the content. The result is a more intentional, collaborative, consistent, and interactive study process than would otherwise be the case.

Outstanding Sociological Imagination Award

This award is given annually by the sociology faculty to one or more sociology majors who amply demonstrated potential for success in graduate school. The student must demonstrate a high GPA as well as engagement and excitement about sociology and application of sociology inside and/or outside of classroom.

This year's recipient is Emily Hernandez. She is majoring in sociology and criminology. The amazing thing about Ms. Hernandez is that she has not only excelled in her classes at Lander, but she has been very active applying her sociological training in the real world. She has done exceptional volunteer work with inmates at the Perry Correctional Institution. Emily's research skills have also been tremendous asset to the Greenwood Community Foundation, which was the site of her internship. Through her research she would like to reform the criminal justice system and in doing so have a significant impact on public policy. She also would like to run for political office one day.

Alpha Kappa Delta helps Gift of Life

The Lander University chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta sponsored a Gift of Life Bone Marrow Registry event on March 17. Pictured are Katie Fowler (Gift of Life), Dr. Daniel Harrison, and sociology students Brooke Tipton, Desjamba Jackson, and Emily Hernandez. Dr. Zach Rubin took the photo. We had a good turn out and got 47 individuals swabbed who will get added to Gift of Life's Blood/ Bone Marrow Registry. If a match to a patient is found, these individuals could be contacted to donate blood or bone marrow. To find out how your school, department, or student organization can help, go to <https://www.giftoflife.org/>



Dr. Daniel Harrison

was interviewed about “Storytelling and Sociology at the End of History” on February 22, 2021 podcast [Trending in Education](#).

In the interview, Dan talks about his latest book, *Live at Jackson Station*. The book tells the story of Jackson Station, a legendary blues bar in Greenwood, SC in the 1980's and early nineties. Dan and the podcast host, Mike Palmer, reflect on the relevance of sociology and the future of higher education. They also discuss Dan's recent article titled “Sociology at the End of History”.



Visiting Lecturer Position

Lander University invites applicants for a Visiting Lecturer of Sociology to begin in August 2021. For more information about the position please visit [Lander University Faculty Vacancies webpage](#).

2021 Joel Thayer Undergraduate Paper Competition Winners Announced

SCSA announced the winner and runner-up of the 2021 Joel Thayer Undergraduate Research Paper Award Competition at a virtual awards ceremony held on April 30. Nancy Jones at the University of South Carolina earned first place for her paper titled, *Sexism and traditional masculinity in country music: Characteristics and impact on the 'ideal' heterosexual relationship*.

Breanna Green at Anderson University earned the runner-up position for her paper titled, *Influence of family closeness on the development of introversion and extroversion*.



Both Jones and Green have been invited to present their research at the 2022 annual SCSA meeting at the University of South Carolina Upstate.

With names and affiliations removed, papers were rated on seven different categories by a five-member committee of SCSA members. Final computation showed clear results for a first-place winner and runner-up. Certificates of participation were awarded to all participants.

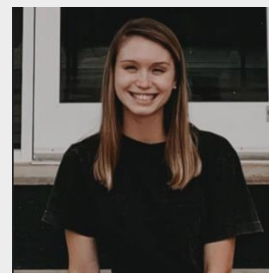
Nancy Jones



Nancy is an International Business and Economics major at the Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina.

Nancy's paper was a senior honors thesis under the direction of Dr. Mathieu Deflem, Professor of Sociology at the University of South Carolina. Nancy will receive a Certificate for Excellence in Undergraduate Research and a cash prize of \$100.

Breanna Green



Breanna is a Psychology major with a focus on research at Anderson University.

Breanna's paper was written under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Triplett, Associate Professor of Sociology at Anderson University. Breanna will receive a Certificate Excellence in Undergraduate Research and a cash prize of \$50.

This year's entries represented the following institutions:

Francis Marion University, Clemson University, Anderson University, University of South Carolina, Coastal Carolina University, and Wofford College.

If you would like to contribute to the Fall 2021 issue of the SCSA newsletter, please email Terry.C@ptc.edu

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