THIS FALL I BEGAN MY TWENTY-FIFTH year at Emory. In that time we have produced newsletters for our undergraduates and certainly news bulletins for our graduate students. This, however, is our first departmental newsletter to all our alumni. Any resemblance of this newsletter to those of my alma maters (University of Washington and Washington State) is intentional; I thank those universities for providing me with excellent templates! My hope is that this Emory Sociology newsletter becomes an annual affair as it is much easier to “catch you up” on one year—rather than twenty-five years—worth of news.

I will not attempt a recap of the last twenty-five years. Instead, let me describe the department as it is now. We have twenty-two faculty members (ten full professors, seven associates, two assistants, and three lecturers). Cathryn Johnson serves as director of graduate studies and Tracy Scott heads our undergraduate program. In the last three years we have hired Tyrone Forman and Amanda Lewis, whose specialties in race contribute to both our social psychology and social inequality concentrations. These two department members quickly assumed leadership positions in the University’s Race and Difference initiative. In addition, Ellen Idler joined the department last year and is director of the campuswide Public Health and Religion initiative. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find stories highlighting the achievements of other faculty members.

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The department maintains strengths in the four substantive concentrations that characterize its graduate training program: culture, political economy and global analysis, social inequality, and social psychology. In the 2009 U.S. News and World Report ratings, our program in social psychology ranked ninth. The department is also known for its strengths in criminology, race, sociology of education, and health, which cross-cut the general concentrations.

For the last five years we have boasted about 200 undergraduate majors. And despite changes in the structure of funding for graduate students and the size of incoming cohorts, about forty-five students participate in our graduate program each year. In 2009–2010 we awarded a record number of PhDs (ten) to students representing different cohorts. Owing to other structural changes in the graduate program—many encouraged by the administration of Dean Lisa Tedesco—we are seeing students achieve PhD candidacy by the beginning of their fifth year of funding. Graduate students are active in the department in various ways, including through their own university-recognized self-governing body, Coalition of Graduates in Sociology, commonly known as COGS.

Besides faculty and students, the staff anchors the department. Veteran Maggie Stephens remains our academic department administrator and graduate program staff member. While my tenure in the department is long among the faculty (though Delores Aldridge and Bob Agnew now mark their thirty-ninth and thirtieth years, respectively), Maggie has us all beat—she began her fortieth year this past summer. With her anticipated retirement (gasp!) in 2011–2012, we will lose our institutional memory. This may be the year to begin a department oral history project. Rounding out the staff are Katie Wilson, a 2006 graduate of Emory College who supports our undergraduate program and maintains our website, and Kim Hall, who tracks the budget, facilitates our grants efforts, and keeps faculty reimbursements coming in. These three ensure that the department runs smoothly, regardless of which faculty member helms it.

Like other universities, Emory has weathered the economic recession in various ways. Yes, our budget took a hit, and there were freezes on hiring and raises. Long-serving Emory College Dean Bobby Paul assured us last spring before he stepped down that we are slowly coming out of the budget “trough.” Incoming Dean Robin Forman, formerly of Rice University, has been assured by college administrative staff of our department’s good standing. (One indirect measure of that status may be the fact that we are often chosen as a pilot department for new endeavors stemming from both the graduate school and the college office. Dare I suggest that our department is a superb guinea pig?) I attribute that good standing to the excellent leadership of former chairs, many of whom continue in active department roles (Alex Hicks, Rick Rubinson, John Boli, and Bob Agnew). From what I learned last year, Sociology is unique among college departments in its depth of field for chair talent.

Although the department has expanded and thrived in the last twenty-five years, it has also been rocked by sadness owing to the untimely deaths of graduate students Maureen Blyer (2002) and Paul Jean (2008), graduate secretary Cathy David (2006), and professor Terry Boswell (2005). In their own ways, these people left indelible marks on the department.

While our intent is to provide you with yearly department updates, we continue to post notable news items as they occur on our department website (www.sociology.emory.edu). This is news about current faculty and students as well as some of the outstanding accomplishments of our alums as well. We would love to hear from you. If you have any professional news you would like to share in the next departmental newsletter, please email it to socinfo@emory.edu.

In the meantime I hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of the Emory Sociology newsletter. We wish you the best for the 2010–2011 year.

Karen A. Hegtvedt
Professor and Chair
‘What Are You Doing Here?’
Ensuring Inclusion: Delores Aldridge’s Lifelong Work

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he met Liam on her first day at St. John of God Brothers Child Guidance Clinic in Dublin, Ireland. It was 1967 and Delores Aldridge, who had just completed her MSW, was there to train social workers. Liam, a young boy, was fascinated with the color of her skin. When he tried to brush the color off her hand, he was told by another social worker that it wouldn't come off, but that did not stop him from putting his hands on her face and hair, saying, “So pretty, like chocolate.” Then he queried her, “Where are you from?” He met her reply, the United States, with skepticism, saying, “No, you couldn’t be. No black people there.” As Aldridge recounted this story, she paused to note that Liam’s comment represented how the world at that time saw the United States. That innocent comment solidified her determination—stimulated by her participation in the civil rights movement and her master’s work—to understand race in America.

Aldridge’s interest in race has been the hallmark of her long and distinguished career. This year, Aldridge, the Grace Towns Hamilton Professor of Sociology and African American Studies marks her thirty-ninth year at Emory. The American Sociological Association has recognized her many achievements by awarding her the Cox-Johnson-Frazier Award, which is given for a lifetime of research, teaching, and service to the community. The ASA program noted that, as a scholar, teacher, administrator, and public intellectual, Aldridge has been a trailblazer who exemplified the tradition of expanding scholarship in the field of race and ethnic relations and advancing the African American community. In addition, the ASA commended her for her activities as a scholar-activist—her publications on gender, health, and education in the African American community, her anti-apartheid efforts, her work on sustainable development in West Africa, and her leadership in numerous professional and community organizations.

The ASA award is only the most recent award that Aldridge has received. Three awards from the 1980s and 1990s are notable: the W. E. B. Du Bois Award from the Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists (1986), the Outstanding Alumni Award from Purdue University (1988), and the Georgia Governor’s Award in the Humanities (1996). In the last decade she has won accolades from other organizations. In 2006 she received the Charles S. Johnson Award for Professional and Scholarly Achievement on Race and the South from the Southern Sociological Society. The Association of Black Sociologists honored her with the A. Wade Smith Award for Teaching, Mentoring, and Service in 2003. The National Council for Black Studies gave her a leadership award in 2001, and Clark Atlanta University bestowed their highest achievement award for Faculty/Staff Excellence in Teaching, Research and/or Service on Aldridge in 2000. Moreover, that award now bears her name as the Delores P. Aldridge-Eldridge McMillan Achievement Award. Similarly, in 2003 Emory established the Delores P. Aldridge Excellence Awards, given by the Office for Multicultural Affairs, to honor her many years of service and, importantly, the extensive mentoring of students she has undertaken in her long career at Emory.

Given Aldridge’s many accomplishments, it is not surprising that she was featured in the twentieth anniversary issue of Upscale magazine (February 2009) in the feature article “History in the Making.” Aldridge was among the twenty individuals profiled in an article, which began, “Filling the shoes of legendary civil rights icons like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Rosa Parks is no easy feat. Along with other contemporaries, [the people profiled here] helped pave the way for many of the changes and rights that we now enjoy.” Aldridge was featured, along with President Barack Obama, as an achiever who was “working hard to create a better tomorrow for the world.”

Aldridge’s pathway to her many achievements began with her BA from Clark College in 1963, followed by an MSW from Atlanta University in 1966. She returned from Ireland to pursue a PhD in sociology at Purdue University. In 1971 the freshly minted PhD graduate became the first African American faculty member at Emory and the founding coordinator of the Black Studies Program. She continued at the helm of that program (although it underwent several name changes) until 1990, when she returned full time to the Department of Sociology. Under her leadership, the current African American Studies program grew to national prominence. After
Graduate Students Help Examine Race in the Classroom

In September 2009 our graduate students in sociology (represented by the Coalition of Graduate Sociologists, or COGS) hosted a successful mini conference at Emory titled Race in the Classroom. This University-wide roundtable workshop also was sponsored by Emory’s Transforming Community Project, the Laney Graduate School, the Provost’s Office, the Race and Difference Initiative, and the Graduate History Society.

Targeting faculty, graduate student instructors, administrators, and staff from all sectors of the University, the workshop provided a means to open a dialogue regarding race as both a substantive concern and a process affecting classroom dynamics. The half-day event began with a presentation by Mark Chesler, professor emeritus of sociology, University of Michigan, author of Challenging Racism in Higher Education. Following his opening speech, the audience broke into roundtable discussions led by scholars from across the University and concluded with presentations to the larger audience on information gathered in the group discussions.

Needless to say, the workshop was a huge success. About ninety-five people participated. Results of an evaluation showed an overwhelming majority felt strongly that a similar workshop should be conducted next year. Indeed, sociology graduate students, along with history graduate students, have been contacted by senior Emory administrators about sponsoring a follow-up workshop that would build upon the information provided by the first. This second Race in the Classroom workshop will take place in late fall or early spring. Our department commends our ambitious, conscientious, and tenacious graduate students for taking the initiative to develop an innovative, effective, and beneficial workshop to help improve our teaching at Emory.

Roundtable discussions included the following topics:

- Being a Minority Instructor in a Predominantly White Classroom
- Incorporating Race and Ethnicity into Your Syllabus
- Continued Involvement in Race and Pedagogy at the University Level
- Using Technology in the Classroom to Engage Issues of Race
- Addressing Issues of Race as a White Instructor
- Race and Curricula in the Natural Sciences
- Facilitating Discussions of Race in a Classroom Environment
- Bridging the Gap: From the Classroom to the Community

[ Ensuring Inclusion continued from page 3 ]

stepping down from her leadership role in the program, she took on other positions of leadership in her work promoting the African American community beyond Emory at other universities—most notably Clark Atlanta—and on the state and national levels.

Aldridge has many stories from her years at Emory, but recalls her first day at Emory when, as a young African American woman, the then-chair of Chemistry asked her, “What are you doing here? You should be across town.” Emory in the early 1970s had yet to promote the diversity it now cherishes nearly forty years later. In 1992 she was awarded the Thomas Jefferson Award at Commencement, given to faculty to honor their significant service to Emory through personal activities, influence, and leadership. While the award is an honor in itself, what she remembers vividly was that it was presented to her when former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was commencement speaker, whom she had met as a delegate to the United Nation’s World Congress of Women in Russia. And Aldridge recalls fondly her first BA student in African American studies, Gloria Bowden, who many years later introduced her when she received the Great Teacher of the Century Award from the Association of Emory Alumni in 1992.

Although Aldridge will retire from Emory in 2011, she has made an indelible mark on the University and the discipline. Her influence is extensive within the academy owing to the many undergraduate and graduate students she has touched as well as the institution itself. Beyond Emory, her activism has benefitted other institutions, influenced national policies, and touched the lives of people living in countries such as Tanzania, Ghana, South Africa, and Gambia where she has been a government consultant.

More than likely Liam would be awed at what the lady with the pretty chocolate skin did in the last forty years to ensure that the image of the United States evoked in the minds of children throughout the world included the diversity of its people.
Survey Data Look at Student Attitudes toward LearnLink

Tracy Scott and Irene Browne each teach a section of the required undergraduate course Sociology 355: Social Research I. Their spring 2010 classes designed and implemented an original survey project using the Emory undergraduate population. The project represented a unique collaboration with the Emory College Office of Information Technology. Not only were students able to use the data for their individual final research papers, but the survey provided results to Carole Meyers, senior director of information technology services at Emory College, regarding students’ use of LearnLink, one of the major communication interfaces on campus. LearnLink allows students to communicate with each other via email and to set up conferences for groups.

Focusing on students’ attitudes toward and use of LearnLink (as well as the beyond campus communication tool, Facebook), the two classes invited a random sample of Emory undergraduates (N=1,265) to complete the online survey. Three hundred and sixty-five students completed the survey (response rate=29 percent). The students then analyzed the data using SPSS.

Overall, most students use LearnLink quite frequently. About 60 percent of respondents say they spend more than half an hour on LearnLink each day, with 35 percent spending more than one hour a day on the program. Most students (88 percent) use LearnLink often for emailing; and 65 percent often use LearnLink academic conferences. Forty-eight percent of students actively check three to five LearnLink conferences, while 35 percent actively check more than five conferences.

We also analyzed LearnLink questions by a number of different social factors (gender, race, class year, major, GPA). Most of these factors did not predict differences in use or importance of LearnLink. However, class year sometimes predicted more engagement with certain LearnLink functions, as fits the different activities of each student year. And, most interestingly, GPA was often significantly related to differences in responses to the LearnLink questions. Students with high GPAs (>3.8) were more likely to be actively engaged in LearnLink than those with lower GPAs (<3.0).

From discussions with Carole Meyers, we have learned that results from the survey already have helped IT more clearly explain the LearnLink environment to other University offices, which in turn helps to ensure support of LearnLink for students at Emory. In the future we will continue to explore ways that Sociology 355 class surveys can provide a means to research issues relevant to other college offices.

LearnLink is also an integral part of Emory student life.

- 92% say that LearnLink “has become a part of my daily routine” (with 72% strongly agreeing with the statement).
- 83% would be “sorry if Emory shut LearnLink down.”
- 78% say they “feel out of touch when I haven’t logged into LearnLink for awhile.”
- 72% agree that LearnLink is “an important part of my Emory experience.”
A **SEUSS-ical Gathering**  
SouthEastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium Celebrates 28th Year

Emory University held the *SouthEastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium (SEUSS)* on February 19 and 20, 2010. As one of the longest running and most successful undergraduate academic conferences, SEUSS celebrated its twenty-eighth year. The conference is jointly sponsored and hosted by the departments of Sociology at Emory and Morehouse College. The Center for Ethics at Emory also partnered in co-sponsoring the symposium this year.

SEUSS provides undergraduate students from universities across the southeastern United States and beyond with the opportunity to present their original research in a professional conference setting. In doing so, students network with undergraduates and faculty from other universities, share their original papers, develop public-speaking skills, and further their professionalization in preparation for graduate school, law school, public health, or the business world.

At the 2010 SEUSS, forty-seven studies were written by fifty-one exceptional undergraduate researchers. Participants represented twenty universities and colleges. The thirteen thematic sessions covered topics ranging from sociological theory to crime and public policy, to the sociology of place, space, and the environment.

Among the variety of theoretically engaged and sophisticated sociological studies presented by undergraduate researchers, three papers were honored with the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research. First place was awarded to Thomas Mowen (University of Louisville), whose paper, “Not in My Name: An Introspective Look at Victims’ Family Clemency Movements and the Myth of Court-Appointed Closure,” examines the changing mood of the citizenry toward death penalty clemency and media portrayals of co-victim closure. Two papers tied for second place. Nicole A. Overley’s (Johns Hopkins University) paper, “The Rise of Megachurches: Innovation, Stagnation, and the Future of Christianity in the United States and the United Kingdom,” was honored for her qualitative comparative examination of the secularization—or “de-churching”—of the United Kingdom juxtaposed with the success of megachurches in the United States. Also tied for second place was a study by Michal David and Rebecca Li of Emory titled “UnderMining Global Human Rights: A Case Study of the Rio Tinto Group,” which deftly explores claims-making among international NGOs against those of the Rio Tinto Mining Company regarding a series of human rights violations.

In her keynote address at the 2010 symposium, Charis Kubrin, associate professor of sociology at George Washington University, highlighted the connection between “private troubles” and “public issues” first articulated by famed sociologist C. Wright Mills in her autobiographic account of becoming a sociologist. Kubrin described how her own experiences and observations about the power of place and social context shapes her current research focused on neighborhoods, crime, and culture. Kubrin is the author of numerous scholarly publications in sociology and criminology and was the recipient of both the American Society of Criminology’s Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award and the Morris Rosenberg Award for Recent Achievement from the District of Columbia Sociological Society in 2005.

The 2011 symposium will be hosted at Morehouse College.

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Two Journals Come to Department

In the past year several faculty members have been named as editors of scholarly journals. Timothy Dowd and his colleague, Susanne Janssen of Erasmus University Rotterdam, assumed the editorship in January 2010 of the journal *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Media, Culture, and the Arts*. This international journal is among the leading outlets for sociological research in culture. Their term will run for at least the next three years.

The American Sociological Association accepted the proposal last spring of Cathryn Johnson and Karen Hegtvedt to co-edit *Social Psychology Quarterly*. And while they began processing manuscripts in August 2010, the official term of their co-editorship runs from 2011–2013. Graduate student Heather Scheuerman is serving as editorial assistant for the journal this year.
Kudos: Notable Awards for 2009–2010

Congratulations go to several faculty members and students who received awards in 2009–2010. Tyrone Forman was one of three scholars selected for an Alphonse Fletcher Sr. Fellowship. This award is given to individuals whose works contribute to improving race relations in American society and thereby further the broad social goals of the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision.

Alex Hicks’ research career was recognized with his induction into the Sociological Research Association.

This year's winner of the departmental Research Award was Dennis J. Condon. His single-authored article, “Social Class, School and Non-school Environments, and Black/White Inequalities in Children’s Learning,” appeared in the October 2009 issue of the American Sociological Review. The impact of this article on the sociology of education is expected to be impressive.

The departmental Teaching Award was bestowed on Elizabeth Griffiths, whose courses and mentoring receive consistently high marks from students.

Graduate student Laura Braden was the recipient of the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Doctoral Fellowship in Women’s Studies. This national award goes to students whose projects represent original and significant research about women that crosses disciplinary, regional, or cultural boundaries. In her dissertation research Braden is using archival records to examine the career paths of male and female artists to determine which opportunities led to long-term success and, ultimately, to inclusion in the artistic canon.

Laura Braden and Christina Steidl were the co-recipients of the departmental Graduate Teaching Award. Laney Graduate School also named these two stellar teachers as Dean’s Teaching Fellows for 2010–2011. The Maureen Blyer Graduate Research Award is given in honor and memory of Maureen Blyer—the student, colleague, and friend to many in the department who died tragically in a cycling accident in 2002. The research of this year’s winners focused on different aspects of environmental identities and perceptions of environmental justice. Co-winners were Lesley Watson for “Environmental Identity and Social Networks as Predictors of Environmentally friendly Behaviors” and Christie Parris for “Justice for All? The Effects of Political Liberalism, Previous Behavior, and Identity on Perceptions of Green and Environmental Injustice.”

The Solomon and Sara Sutker Award for Outstanding Student recognizes distinguished undergraduate scholarship in sociology. Sara Berney, a double major in sociology and African studies, received the award for both her honors thesis “HIV/AIDS Education Program Effectiveness: A Case Study in Rural Uganda” and her participation in the research activities of several faculty members. Berney also was a recipient of Emory’s 2010 Humanitarian Award for her efforts in to build a school in Uganda.

Kudos go to two other undergraduates. Khytie Brown, a religion and sociology joint major, received a 2009–2010 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. This fellowship is one of the most distinguished national honors programs, with a nine-year history at Emory. Tiffany Gills, an educational studies major and sociology minor, received a 2009–2010 Woodrow Wilson Rockfeller Brothers Fund Fellowship. She is one of twenty-five recipients nationwide to receive this fellowship for “aspiring teachers of color.”

Sara Berney
Select Faculty Publications 2010–2011

Emory faculty members are noted in **boldface**.


PhDs Awarded: Department of Sociology 2009–2010


Monique Gabrielle Carry, “‘In Spite of It All’: Resilience, Sexual Identity Acceptance, and Disclosure among Black and Latina Same-Sex Attracted Women.” Adviser: Corey Keyes


Barret Andrew Michalec, “Caring to Learn, but Learning to Care? The Role of Empathy in Preclinical Medical Training.” Adviser: Corey Keys

Aristide Pasqual Javier Sechandice, “To Look Like a Modern Ruler: Diffusion of Fashion among State Elites.” Adviser: John Boli

Beth Ann Tarasawa, “Fight or Flight? Immigration Status Competition and Language Assistance Resources in Metropolitan Atlanta.” Adviser: Regina Werum

Sylvia Darlen Turner, “Thy Kingdom Come: The Intersection of King Cotton and Immigration Policy.” Adviser: Delores P. Aldridge

Select Graduate Publications 2009–2010

Emory graduate students are noted in boldface.


ASA in Atlanta: Reuniting with Alumni

Because meetings of the American Sociological Association are held in Atlanta infrequently, graduate students urged the department to take the opportunity to welcome back alumni at this year’s meeting. And despite the budgetary constraints of the last few years, the department orchestrated a graduate alumni reception on August 14, 2010.

About fifty people attended the reception at the Hilton Hotel. Current graduate students mingled with alumni, some of whom earned their degrees before the current graduates walked the planet. Alumni caught up with former professors, including some who have retired from Emory. All desserts were consumed but many vegetables left behind. The din in the room suggested a lively gathering and, while we are unlikely to repeat the event every year, it appears that we now have a critical mass of graduates who might share a table at the ASA-sponsored Departmental Alumni Night. So look for us next year. In the meanwhile, enjoy the pictures in this newsletter.

Note: While organizers hoped their invitation had reached all alumni, on the day of the reception we learned—much to our surprise and deep regret—that some alumni never received the invitation. Please accept our apologies and know that we hope to repeat the event in future years and will make every effort to reach out to everyone.

Support the Department

Donations at all levels to the department are welcome. Funds will be used to support ongoing programs (graduate and undergraduate research and/or travel) as well as to launch new initiatives (e.g., symposia). Please indicate how you would like your donations directed.

Online Donations
Contributors can donate online by visiting the Association of Emory Alumni website: www.alumniconnections.com/donate/emory

Instructions:
1. Under “Select Direction” choose Emory College.
2. Under “Select Fund” choose Other.
3. For “Other” type Sociology (and briefly note how funds should be directed) in the text box provided.
4. Click the “Next” button at the bottom of the page.

Donations by Mail
Contributions can be mailed to:
Karen Hegtvedt, Chair
Department of Sociology
Emory University
225 Tarbutton Hall
1555 Dickey Drive
Atlanta, GA 30322

Checks should be made payable to Emory University with “Sociology Gift” noted in the memo section of the check. Please include a note indicating how funds should be directed.

Thank You!