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## Hello!

I am excited to share events of the 2022-23 academic year!

This year we launched both the General Sociology B.S./B.A. degree program at OSU-Tulsa and a General Sociology B.S./B.A. degree program online to serve our distance students. Changes in our programs offer greater clarity in design and additional courses of interest for students. We have seen an enrollment increase, particularly in our Criminology and Criminal Justice options!

If you have visited our offices recently you have likely seen some new faces! John (Jay Dee) Estep began his tenure as our administrative support specialist during the summer of 2022. He's the kind voice you'll hear and the smiling face you'll see if you call or stop by our front office. Dr. Peyman Hekmatpour — Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Oklahoma — engages in research and teaching in the areas of Environmental Sociology and Global & Transnational Sociology. He joined us in Tulsa as a teaching assistant professor this spring to enhance our on-site Tulsa offerings. Welcome, Mr. Estep and Dr. Hekmatpour!

Three new faculty members will be joining us this summer, two in Stillwater and one in Tulsa. Dr. Alex Diamond — Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin — engages in research and teaching in the areas of Political Sociology, Criminology, Environmental Sociology and Ethnography. His interests enhance existing departmental strengths in Criminology and Criminal Justice and Environmental Sociology. Dr. Nick Heiserman — Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of South Carolina — engages in research and teaching in the areas of Social Psychology, Inequality, and Race, Class and Gender. His work enhances existing departmental strengths in Social Inequality, with a particular emphasis on Race and Ethnicity. Dr. Daniel Alvord — Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Kansas and a post-doc at Northeastern University — engages in research and teaching in the areas of Political and Economic Sociology, Urban Sociology, Ethnography and Qualitative Methods. His interests enhance existing departmental foundational strengths and he will join our faculty at OSU-Tulsa. Welcome, Drs. Diamond, Heiserman and Alvord!

I am immensely proud of the sociology community we are building at OSU (in Stillwater, Tulsa, and online) and of our undergraduate and graduate students. Our research productivity continues to be strong, with grants from NSF and NIH among other funders, and pieces selected for top-tier publications. We offer exciting courses to engage current and future students, and we are making an impact with our service activities on

campus and in the broader community.

All my best,

Dr. Tamara Mix

Dress Professor and Department Head of Sociology



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**Give**   
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**1,890 MINUTES FOR OSU**

## **Thank you!**

What an excellent Give Orange 2023! This year we were challenged by an anonymous donor to get at least 10 individual donors to Give Orange for our student scholarship fund. We are so excited to announce that we didn't just meet our goal — we exceeded it!

Generosity from our Loyal and True Department of Sociology network of alumni, faculty, staff and current students allowed us to raise over \$2,000 in funds for emergent needs-based scholarships for current sociology students and provide support for events, department community building and applied experiences for students! THANK YOU!

"We are thrilled to be able to offer support and experiences for our students both inside and outside the classroom. Your generous donations help to make this possible. We are immensely grateful!" – Dr. Tamara Mix

## OSU sociology professor receives \$2.7M NIH grant to study cognitive aging



Adam Roth was awarded a \$2.7 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to fund his research on rural-urban disparities in cognitive aging over the next five years.

Roth and his two collaborators from Indiana University will extend their current research that focuses on the social determinants of cognitive aging.

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## CAS honors Dr. Coley

At the 2022 College of Arts at Sciences Convocation Ceremony, Dr. Jonathan Coley was awarded the CAS Junior Faculty Award for Scholarly Excellence. This

award goes to a faculty member who has inspired the less-experienced around them by passing on their accumulated knowledge and experience.

"I was honored to receive this award," said Dr. Coley. "I am really fortunate to be at a place that values and supports faculty research, and I am excited to continue on with my research here at Oklahoma State University."

We are beyond proud of Dr. Coley's accomplishments, and deeply value his contribution to our students, the department and this university. The Department of Sociology is excited to recognize Dr. Coley for his achievements and we all look forward to his many contributions that are yet to come!

Congratulations!

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## **Criminology and Criminal Justice gains momentum**

One of the key areas we, as a department, are always cognizant of is growth. Are we growing as a department, not just in numbers but in new theories, best practices and adaptive strategies? When looking at how our department could better serve the desires and expectations of a newer, culturally diverse stream of undergraduates, the area of Criminology and Criminal Justice stuck out to us as being the ideal area for improvement and visibility.

Among our majors, we always had a sizable proportion who selected Applied Sociology with an emphasis in Law, Crime, and Social Justice. However, we realized, because that option was buried under the Applied Sociology name, it had low visibility for students who were interested in pursuing careers in criminology research, juvenile justice, policing, or corrections. We created the Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJ) degree option that officially launched in Fall 2021. We also created a new minor with the same name. Student response has been enthusiastic — the number of majors increased from three to 73 in the first year, and another 57 students had selected the CCJ minor by Fall 2022. Interest in the specialty at recruitment events and admitted students' days have consistently been high since the creation of the major and minor.

We developed several new courses to meet the demand, including Introduction to Criminal Justice, Drugs and Drug Policy in the United States, Gangs and Society, and Policing and Society. We also have partnered with the Oklahoma State University Police Department to offer an applied policing class, Building Bridges through Policing. In addition to developing new courses, we also are meeting student demand by offering many of our CCJ courses online and at OSU-Tulsa. We hope and believe that our program will continue on its current trajectory, bringing ever more students into the world of sociology.

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## **Conversations in Cushing**

Establishing a presence in community schools is an important tool for helping grow our department. Dr. Tamara Mix, Dr. Srijana Karki and Ph.D. candidate Dhruva Das pioneered a program that would accomplish exactly that. In December, the trio traveled to Cushing High School to meet with the AP Human

Geography students of Mr. Bill Peeper, an exemplary teacher and finalist for the 2023 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year award.

Dr. Karki, a native of Nepal, and Das, who hails from India, were able to introduce eager young students to sociological concepts and how those concepts applied to their unique experiences growing up in their respective countries and cultures. The AP students were excited to learn and exchange ideas with these representatives of sociology from OSU.

Getting younger students engaged with sociology will be an excellent catalyst for expanding our department over the coming years, and continued alumni support makes expeditions like this possible. "It was really exciting to interact with such engaged students!" Mix said. "We hope to be able to continue similar presentations, conversations and collaborations into the future."

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## New Faculty



### Meet Dr. Alex Diamond

Allow us to introduce to you a fantastic new addition to our department! Dr. Alex Diamond, originally from Portland, Oregon, joins our team on the Stillwater campus this fall. He earned his B.A. from Wesleyan University and his Ph.D. from the University of Texas - Austin. Upon arrival, Dr. Diamond is excited to publish "An Uncomfortable Peace", a book based on his research in Colombia.

"My research describes Colombia's peace process from the perspective of a rural village that suffered from decades of violence, coca cultivation and armed group control," Diamond said. "Based on three years of ethnographic research in the village, I describe peacebuilding, the formation of state power and rural development in everyday life."

Dr. Diamond hopes to strengthen the community of qualitative researchers within our department, both faculty and graduate students alike. He looks forward to working with undergraduates as he takes on an Introduction to Criminal Justice course in our fastest-growing sub-specialty. "I hope to connect with undergraduate students through showing them how sociology can help explain problems in their everyday lives," Diamond said.

Warm up your finger-pistols, Dr. Diamond, and welcome to the Cowboy Family!



### **Meet Dr. Daniel Alvord**

Join us in welcoming Dr. Daniel (Dan or Danny) Alvord to our department! Originally hailing from Kansas City, Dr. Alvord joins our Tulsa campus faculty this year. Earning a Sociology B.A. and M.A. from the University of Central Missouri and his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, Dr. Alvord will be teaching classes and continuing his research trajectory by investigating local communities.

"Most immediately I want to accomplish my book manuscript and begin new research projects investigating sociologically relevant questions in local communities across Oklahoma," Alvord said. "I am also interested in mentoring graduate and undergraduate students in their research interests."

Dr. Alvord's first endeavor as a Cowboy will be teaching Collective Behavior and Social Movements this fall. We are thrilled with his addition to the team, and eagerly await his contribution to the department, the university and the discipline.

Welcome to the OSU family, Dr. Alvord!



### **Meet Dr. Nick Heiserman**

Marshalltown, Iowa is home for Dr. Nick Heiserman. After completing his undergraduate degree at the University of Iowa, Nick traveled to Columbia, South Carolina where he completed his graduate studies at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Heiserman chose Social Psychology and Inequalities as his areas of specialization, and we're pleased to have him, and his expertise, join our faculty in Stillwater this fall.

"I have a lot of work in intersectional stereotypes I want to pursue," Heiserman said. "There's not been much research on them — most research on stereotypes takes a one-identity-at-a-time kind of view so there's no shortage of possibilities. I'm also studying discrimination and how it relates to workplace contexts and the ideologies that frame unequal treatment as either unfair or sensible. I'm really interested in doing research that connects things like stereotypes and discrimination to broader workplace and organizational contexts to show how these things interact with bigger social processes."

Dr. Heiserman wants to invest in his network of collaborators and hopes to develop projects with colleagues here at Oklahoma State and other institutions. We want to welcome Dr. Heiserman to our departmental family and look forward to the contributions he will make as we continue to grow as a department over the coming years.

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## **New Staff**



In late June of 2022, John Estep, affectionately known as Jay Dee around the office, joined our team as the new administrative support specialist. Jay Dee comes to us from West Virginia. He relocated to Stillwater following a devastating flood in his hometown of Richwood in 2016, and has been a dedicated Cowboy fan ever since.

Jay Dee brings nearly two decades of customer service experience to the role, and also has experience working with the American Federation of Teachers doing recruitment. He also worked with the Service Employee's International Union where he lobbied state governments and canvassed neighborhoods across the country during the 2016 presidential campaign. Jay Dee also participated in staging protests and strikes with the Fight for \$15 initiative in both South Carolina and at McDonald's headquarters in Chicago.

His upbeat attitude, welcoming demeanor and expert comedic timing have made him a welcome and exciting addition to the team — fostering an atmosphere of joy and comradery within the department. We are so happy to introduce Mr. Estep to you all and officially welcome him to our Department of Sociology family. We look forward to all the contributions he will make to the success of our students, faculty and department!

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## Recent Graduates Next Steps





### **Dr. Christine Thomas**

We are very pleased to highlight Christine Thomas, Ph.D.! Dr. Thomas completed her Ph.D. in Sociology in the summer of 2022, with comprehensive areas of Inequality and Social Psychology. Her next adventure in life was being named the academic advisor and DEI coordinator for the Honors College right here at Oklahoma State University!

"I am incredibly grateful for the education and opportunities I received during my time in the Department of Sociology," Thomas said. "Thanks to the program's exceptional faculty, rigorous coursework, research and teaching opportunities and the culture of support, I was able to develop a strong foundation of knowledge and skills that have been invaluable in my current role."

Dr. Thomas reflects on her time with the department fondly, holding special reverence for her committee chair and mentor, Dr. Kelley Sittner, and Department Head Dr. Tamara Mix.

"Dr. Sittner challenged me to think critically and formulate innovative solutions to complex problems. Her guidance and support have been invaluable to my academic and professional success," Thomas said. "Likewise I am grateful to Dr. Tammy Mix, whose vision, dedication and tireless work has helped shape me into the scholar and professional I am today."

Dr. Thomas holds a passion for teaching and for working with students. "Over the next 5 years, I will continue working with students in a variety of capacities, helping them to see the world through a sociological lens and empowering them to become active, engaged citizens."

We are certain you will accomplish exactly that, and so much more.

Congratulations, Dr. Thomas! We are all immensely proud of you!



### **Dr. Srijana Karki**

An exciting new chapter begins this fall for our 2021 Ph.D. graduate, Srijana Karki! Immediately following graduation, Dr. Karki stayed on with the department as a visiting assistant professor. While with us, she taught a wide range of courses to our undergraduate students, covering topics from Introductory Sociology to Social Stratification.

Beginning in the fall of 2023, Dr. Karki will become the newest faculty member at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi! She will continue her research agenda there, as well as teach undergraduate courses focusing on her areas of specialization: stratification and environment.

"I am incredibly grateful to my advisor, Dr. Tamara Mix, for supporting me during my graduate career and beyond," said Karki. "I learned to balance my research, service and teaching obligations."

Karki gives thanks and credit to the faculty and staff of the department for their roles in her academic successes. Most importantly, she wanted to thank the alumni.

"During my graduate career, I received several departmental and university awards, including the Richard Dodder Scholarship Award, the Sarah Belusko Scholarship Award, Women's Faculty Council Research Award, and the OSU Foundation Distinguished Graduate Fellowship. I want to thank donors to the department and the university who make these awards possible. These awards are essential to graduate students to recognize their hard work and motivate them to continue."

As Dr. Karki embarks on this exciting new role in Corpus Christi, she looks forward to engaging with the next generation of sociology students, and to continuing her collaboration with Dr. Mix. While she looks forward to settling in as an Islander at TAMCC, Srijana wants us all to rest assured that she will forever be a Cowboy at heart.



### **Dr. Olivia Fleming**

We are proud to congratulate Olivia Fleming on her exciting new career opportunity! Miss Fleming, who is expected to complete her Ph. D. in June, will continue her life's journey by becoming an assistant professor of Sociology at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

"Student engagement is a top priority at Transylvania University," said Fleming. "I plan to increase student interest in Sociology by continuing with my foraging project, with goals to speak with the foraging community, not just in Kentucky, but across the broader Appalachian region. My hope is that my students will leave my classes with increased critical thinking skills, guiding them to put theory into practice."

Fleming credits the sociology department for much of her success. "My advisor, Dr. Mix, really put up with a lot but always in an incredibly patient and kind way," said Fleming. "She really challenged me to think about and properly define exactly what kind of researcher I wanted to be. The staff in the department don't get nearly enough credit — they do so much to keep us all moving forward and make navigating the program and the department so easy. My fellow graduate students felt more like family, and the encouragement from both students and my professors was invaluable to me."

Look out Lexington! You have one amazing Cowboy heading your way! We are so proud of you, Olivia, and can't wait to see what amazing things you achieve

in the future!

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## In Closing

As we look to next year, we'll continue to grow and build our sociology community via enhanced online and face-to-face offerings, and opportunities for student engagement. Thanks to generous donor support, in addition to our yearly scholarship awards, we will offer several Sociology Student Support Scholarships — emergent needs-based scholarships for current sociology students. We appreciate our donors for their generous contributions that make scholarships and community building possible for our students!

I continue to see the dedication and creativity of our students, faculty and staff. Our department members are amazing! I am honored to work with them as a colleague and department head.

I welcome alumni to be in touch to share their experiences, accomplishments and life transitions with us. It is always a pleasure to hear from you! Please visit our [website](#) or follow us on social media for regular updates.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer!

Dr. Tamara L. Mix  
Dresser Professor and Department Head of Sociology



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