Denis O’Hearn named Head of the Sociology Department

**In his words.....**

On the eve of my appearance as the new Chair of the Sociology Department at TAMU, I am glad to have the opportunity to write a few words about my hopes and dreams for the next few years.

First, to introduce myself. I was born and raised in the southwest (Carlsbad, New Mexico), although from my twenties I wound up living either in the frozen north of the US or in gray, rainy Belfast in Ireland. I am overjoyed to be returning to a land without winter (although, like Ireland, it seems you get the rain).

Since my time as an undergraduate at the University of New Mexico I always studied and taught in public universities. I believe that large state universities like TAMU offer the best hope of providing an outstanding education to many students from diverse backgrounds. While they may still be “ivory towers” to a degree, they are closer to the working and poor communities of this country than the elite private universities. State universities were my route from being the son of a potash miner to now the chair of a fine sociology department. Along the way I have been privileged to work in other great public universities including the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Queens University of Belfast in Ireland, Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, and most recently SUNY-Binghamton. Working and teaching in state universities has introduced me to all kinds of interesting students from whom I have learned a lot. And I have been blessed to live in great communities among people (many of whom could never go to university) who have a hunger for knowledge and a natural ability to debate the world around them. I have learned that the world is quite full of people with “sociological imagination,”

When I accepted the position of Chair of Sociology at TAMU, I wrote to faculty and students, listing core principles that I intend to follow. I will repeat briefly.

1) Transparency, democracy, collegiality. Texas A&M sociology faculty have seriously examined and debated the place of the core areas within the department, future hiring priorities, and general priorities and processes. I have no desire to change this or to make a sudden imprint on the Department. I will abide by departmental decisions about priorities in hiring and curriculum. I hope to promote the ethos of sharing of research and strong collegiality that already exists in the Department.

2) Diversity. I fully support the Department’s efforts at achieving diversity in all areas including student admissions and faculty hiring. I will do everything I can to strengthen these efforts.

3) Autonomy. I will strive to protect departmental autonomy, while maintaining good relations with the college and university administration and fighting for more resources for the Department.

4) Protection of and service to students. The Sociology Department attracts a body of graduate students that are not only smart and motivated but who do interesting and important research. I have not yet met many undergrads at TAMU but I hear great things about them, even in faraway New York! Encouragement and protection of our students will be my highest priority.

5) Staff are sacred. Without them there is no Department. I look forward to a respectful and fruitful working relationship with the fabulous staff in the Department.

I’d like to say a few extra words about a particular concern of mine. I was thrilled by the energy I observed in the Department’s internship program and other efforts to reach out to communities. Just after my last trip to College Station I heard a radio program about Texas’s “10% rule”. It followed an upper-middle-class girl from Austin and a working-class Latina from a small town in central Texas as they made their decisions about where to go to university. Their experiences illustrated problems in enhancing diversity at UT and TAMU. The upper-middle-class girl, even though she was not in the top ten percent of her class, nonetheless found a way into UT because her family knew how to work the system. The Latina, a top student in her high school, agonized over whether to go to TAMU or to a local teacher’s college. In the end, although she dreamed of going to TAMU, the big far-off university was just too intimidating. With considerable sadness, she went to her local teacher’s college.

This young girl’s story really moved me because I went through a similar experience when I decided to go to UNM in Albuquerque. I remember how scared I was in my first months there. I even wrote a rather pathetic letter to my parents telling them that I was homesick and just wanted to go back and live with them in my hometown. Thankfully, with their encouragement, I stuck it out and since then I feel I have truly become a citizen of the world.

I really felt for the girl on the radio show. I hate to think that poor young people, perhaps children of migrants, pass up great opportunities because they haven’t the confidence or knowledge about how to follow up on things that are on offer. So I am particularly interested in working with our advisors and the department on extending and deepening our involvement in outreach to prospective students throughout the state.

I am scheduled to begin officially as Chair of the Department on September 1, 2016. But I will spend most of July and August in College Station/Bryan and I hope to use that time productively, by meeting and talking to as many students and faculty as I can. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns and don’t be surprised to hear me come aknockin’.

Writing from occupied Haudenosaunee territory (New York)
Christopher Mathey received the Will Rogers Memorial Scholarship.

Alma Trevino received the Kaplan Assistantship for 2015-2016.

Richard Abel received the Kaplan Assistantship for 2016-2017.

Award for Best Student Paper

Doctoral Level: Guadalupe Marquez-Velarde
Master’s Level: Gabe Miller

Christopher Mathey received the Will Rogers Memorial Scholarship.

Apryl Williams received the 2016 Ruth Schaffer Award for her paper, "On Thursdays We Watch Scandal: Communal Viewing and Black Twitter."

Verna Keith has been awarded a Cornerstone Faculty Fellowship for the next 4 years. This fellowship is awarded to senior faculty for "outstanding professional record and promise of continued scholarly success." Research, Teaching and Service are all considered in the award.

Judy Linneman has been awarded the college level Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching. The purpose of the award is to “recognize, encourage, and reward superior classroom teachers.”

Reuben May was one of four members of the Texas A&M University faculty honored with a University Professorship for Undergraduate Teaching Excellence – UPUTE Award. Only those most distinguished in teaching undergraduate students and exhibiting unparalleled excellence in the field of teaching are chosen as recipients.

Honors and Awards

Simmel Department Summer Assistantship Award
Ceylan Engin
Bruce Reese
Crystal Murry
Monica Williams
Alma Trevino Garza
Nayoung Heo
Marissa Cisneros
Amorette Young
Cheryl Rollman-Tinajero
Apryl Williams

STARS College Level Summer Assistantship Awards:

Guadalupe Marquez-Velarde
Kelly McNamera
Sharron Wang
Hyunseok Hwang

Alma Trevino received the Kaplan Assistantship for 2015-2016.

Richard Abel received the Kaplan Assistantship for 2016-2017.
GN: Please tell us about yourself.  
Misty: I formerly worked in the Naval ROTC department here at A&M. I am taking classes at Blinn and hope to one day finish my degree in Psychology.

GN: Where are you from?  
Misty: I grew up in Houston. I have lived in Brenham for the past 6 years.

GN: Do you have any children?  
Misty: I have 2 daughters. Audrey is 13 and plays clarinet in the school band. Reagan is 7 and just plays. LOL!

GN: How would you describe yourself in three (3) words?  
Misty: Friendly, professional, funny.

GN: Please describe an interesting event in your life.  
Misty: I love football. My first Aggie football game was vs Alabama in 2013. I was able to go on the field before the game, sat 5 rows behind the home bench. It was very hot and crowded but a very exciting day. [It was] my first real taste of Aggieland.

GN: What most interests you about the Sociology department?  
Misty: I really like working with such a diverse, happy group of people.
From left to right: Jessica Barron (an A&M graduate who’s now a postdoc at Duke), Danny Malone and Nicole Jones

## ABOUT TOWN

### JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank Ortega</td>
<td>Diablo Valley College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amber Fox</td>
<td>California State University – Fresno</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.J. Murphy</td>
<td>California State University - Long Beach</td>
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<td>Gwenetta Curry</td>
<td>University of Alabama</td>
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<td>Danny Malone</td>
<td>Coker College</td>
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<td>Zinobia Bennefield</td>
<td>University of North Carolina – Charlotte</td>
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**GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

**Aldana Marquez, Beatriz.** Forthcoming. “The Effects of Hacienda Culture: Domestic Division of Labor within the Charro Community.” *Gender Issues.*


**Williams, Jimmy J., and Crystal L. Murry.** Forthcoming. Dying on Death Row in the Twenty-First Century (Other than by Execution). *Corrections Today.*


**Williams, Apryl.** Forthcoming “On Thursdays We Watch Scandal | Reflections of IRL Community Ties on Black Twitter,” *Digital Sociologies.*

**Williams, Apryl.** 2016 “You’ve been catfished | An analysis of postemotionalism in ‘reality’ television and audience response on Twitter.” *Emerald Studies in Media and Communication.*


**Robinson, Laura & Apryl Williams.** 2015. “Where we’ve been and where we are going” *Information, Communication, and Society.*


RECENT FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Campbell, Mary E. and Molly A. Martin. Forthcoming; published online August 11, 2015. “Race, Immigration and Exogamy among the Native Born: Variation across Communities.” Sociology of Race and Ethnicity.


Jewell, Joseph O. 2015. “‘We Have in This City Many Good Mexican Citizens’: The Race-Class Intersection and Racial Boundary Shifting in Late Nineteenth Century San Antonio.” Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 1-14.


James Burk: Editorial Board Member, Armed Forces & Society

Mary Campbell: Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 2013+

John Eason: Editorial Board Member, Crime and Deviance section of Sociology Compass, 2015+

Joe Feagin: Founding Editor, Perspectives on a Multiracial America, 2003+
        Founding Editor, New Critical Viewpoints Series, 2010+
        Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity

Sarah Gatson: Editorial Board Member, Contemporary Sociology

Verna Keith: Editorial Board Member, Society and Mental Health

Alex McIntosh: Editorial Board Member, Food, Culture and Society

Stjepan Mestrovic: Editorial Board Member, Journal of Forensic Social Science Association
        Series Editor, Routledge for Contemporary and Classical Social Theory
        (f/k/a Ashgate)

Wendy Moore: Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Race and Ethnicity

Nancy Plankey-Videla: Editorial Board Member, Organizations and Work section of Sociology Compass

Dudley Poston: Series Editor, International Handbooks of Population, 2006 - present
        Corresponding Editor, SINET: Social Indicators Network News, 1996+
        Editorial Committee of 人口研究 (Population Research)
        Editorial Board of 人口學刊 (Population Studies)

Harland Prechel: Editorial Board Member, Research in Political Sociology

Arthur Sakamoto: Editorial Board Member, Sociology of Education

Jane Sell: Editorial Board Member, Social Forces
        Special Issue Co-Editor, Social Psychology Quarterly
        Editorial Board Member, Advances in Group Processes

Kazuko Suzuki: Editorial Board Member, Oxford University Press series for “Studies in Comparative Political Theory”
Congratulations, Graduates!!!!

PhD Recipients
Zinobia Bennefield
Gwenetta Curry
Hương Lê
C.J. Murphy
Frank Ortega