

Patricio Korzeniewicz, PhD

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Classes are over, we are in the midst of finals and Commencement 2015 is upon us. This has been a busy year. As other departments within our university, Sociology has been working hard at identifying promising strategies for continuing to improve the quality of our graduate and undergraduate programs. In academic departments, such reassessments often respond in part to a combination of financial concerns and changing university-wide priorities: indeed, these are important considerations when trying to identify how to best marshal the resources needed to conduct new hires, support faculty research, and train new generations of Sociologists. But beyond such considerations, our department also engages in such critical reassessments to identify what steps we can take over the coming years to better provide a program of excellence for Sociological research and training. Over the coming year, you will see some significant changes come into place.

Many of you were able to join us in some of the significant events we organized this year. To mention a few: Dana Fisher organized an exciting Urban Environmental Stewardship Conference (held in April), featuring top national and international scholars. Rashawn Ray and the Critical Race Initiative held the Annual Parren Mitchell Symposium, timely addressing “Intellectual Activism, Social Justice and Criminalization.” Our Annual Rosenberg Lecture, coordinated by Meyer Kestnbaum featured Professor Julia Adams (Yale University), speaking on “Routes to Modernity.” And our Annual Form Lecture brought us Dr. Sunita Kishor (Maryland, 1992), who shared insightful perspectives into the work of the Demographic and Health Survey. If you were forced to miss the events, or would like more information about our future agenda, please visit [www.socy.umd.edu].

I am happy to report that two of our outstanding faculty have been promoted. Assistant Professor Julie Park will be returning in the next academic year as Associate Professor with Tenure. Professor Park is considered to be a top expert in the study of the adaptation process of immigrants and their children in the U.S., and her work has advanced new methodological procedures (the “generation cohort method,” also known as the “Park-Myers Method”) to study the social and economic integration of immigrants. She is an accomplished teacher at both the graduate and undergraduate level, and has

contributed a great deal to promoting interdisciplinary collaboration between Sociology at BSOS and the Asian American Studies Program.

Associate Professor Joan Kahn will be returning as Full Professor. Professor Kahn has become widely considered as a leading scholar social demography, focusing on issues ranging from fertility research (in her previous work) to the study of the life-course, aging processes and intergenerational relationships (her current research). She has published in some of the most important journals of her fields (such as *Demography*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, and *Journal of Marriage and Family*). In addition, as many of our Alumni can attest, Joan is one of the best teachers and mentors in our department.

We are looking ahead for another great year for the department, and I hope you have a productive summer!

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