

# SocioNews



## NSF Grant for the Natural and Social Sciences

By Corinne Melrowitz

An exciting new \$622,000 grant has just been approved at the end of September, thanks to the efforts made by TCNJ faculty members belonging to the Schools of Engineering, Science, and Culture & Society, including our very own Dr. Diane Bates and Dr. Elizabeth Borland. There seems to be a trend in the scarcity of women employed at the full professor level in the disciplines that are supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The College of New Jersey looks to promote equity in the sciences through a brand new program called TCNJ's Advancement Program, or TAP.

Dr. Elizabeth Borland has expertise in the field of gender based issues, and is looking forward to conducting a campus-wide climate survey of professors at TCNJ, followed by a series of qualitative interviews of professors in NSF-supported disciplines. A fellow Sociology student who has since graduated, Dan Suarez, assisted Dr. Borland in compiling the climate survey. Once all the data has been collected, and all identifying information has been removed, the Sociology department looks forward to hopefully offering a research 390 course in the future. Here students would be able to work with the research that has been

conducted. In addition, this summer Dr. Diane Bates will be working with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, creating a longitudinal database of human resources information. The College has never before kept a long running set of data concerning information regarding faculty and employment. Both of these projects fall under the umbrella of the Equity Assessment Initiative.

Another key partner in developing this grant has been Hunter College, who has had successful mentorship and professional development initiatives of their own. The Mentorship Initiative will enable female faculty members to develop relationships with mentors both belonging to the TCNJ community, and also those outside of it, in the mentee's field. With \$172,000 of the grant money going to facilities and administration, not only is this grant benefitting TCNJ faculty, but the entire TCNJ community-students included. The Sociology department is excited to be involved in this program and has high hopes that TCNJ will be able to serve as an example for other college institutions looking to remedy the problem of gender inequalities in their own institutions.

## A "Viral" Education Campaign on Recycling

By Julia Flagg

In recent years, students have vocalized their concern and confusion about the TCNJ recycling program, with many claiming that a lack of bins is the reason why the recycling program is not as effective as it could be. To test this hypothesis, a few Sociology students conducted a campus-wide survey to determine the location and spread of recycling bins during the Fall 2008 semester. The results showed that a lack of bins was not the problem; the students found that faculty, staff and students were not properly educated about recycling and that this lack of education made the program less effective. Although people often believe

that they are doing what is best by throwing everything into a recycling container, this often causes more harm than good. The TCNJ recycling contract only permits certain items in each commingled or paper container; anything not on this list is considered trash. When trash is thrown into a container that is full of recyclables, the entire bag must be placed in the garbage.

My for-credit internship in Spring 2009 with the Office of Occupational Safety and Environmental Services (the office on campus that is responsible for recycling) represented the first aca-

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demographic link between this Office and the Department of Sociology. The goal of my internship was to begin a "Viral Education Campaign" about recycling. The purpose of the campaign was to directly educate as many community members as possible about the proper TCNJ recycling guidelines, and then encourage these people to spread their newly acquired knowledge with others; thus the proper information about recycling would spread like a "virus" throughout campus. I sought to reach people through a wide variety of means: I wrote an article for *The Signal*, I recorded a public service announcement (PSA) that played on the campus radio station, I made alterations to the Recycling Program website, I created pens and magnets that display the Recycling Program website, I researched the recycling programs at other universities, I worked specifically on implementing paper recycling bins in the freshmen dorms, I worked specifically with the Sodexo staff to decrease contamination in the recycling containers in the library



café, I helped plan programs that encouraged "green" behaviors (i.e. Dump & Run and the National Teach-In for Global Warming Solutions), as well as a variety of other tasks. Every project was geared towards increasing campus community members' level of education about the TCNJ Recycling Program and altering their behaviors.

While I made strides to improve the Recycling Program during my internship, there is still much work left to be done. As the current co-president of Water Watch (an environmental activism group at TCNJ), I have enlisted the help of eager members to continue to spread the "virus" of proper education. Our group visits student organizations and makes brief presentations about the recycling guidelines in place at TCNJ. We answer students' questions and provide them with the pens and magnets I created that promote the recycling website. We are working hard to educate as many campus community members as possible in order to create positive social change at The College of New Jersey.

#### From The Classroom to 'Down Under': An Interview with Dr. Clydesdale

By Marjorie Blicharz

As many in our department may have noticed, there will be an absence of one of our very own professors during the Spring 2010 semester, Dr. Timothy Clydesdale. I was lucky enough to sit down and talk with Dr. Clydesdale about his upcoming plans on the subject and how he is continually providing new knowledge for sociologists.

**MB:** What are your plans for next semester?

**TC:** Next semester, I will be going to Melbourne, Australia for 4 months, starting in January and returning in May. I am going to have the opportunity to conduct interviews with college seniors and recent college graduates in hopes of adding a comparative research between students in America to those in Australia, focusing now on 'life after college'.

**MB:** How do you plan on obtaining your information?

**TC:** It will be a qualitative survey of those around me. I will have an officially appointed position at the university and will just use the connections I have with the students present, and from then I hope it will snowball out. There are lots of universities in Melbourne, lots of people go there for school and other reasons because it is a major city. I also offer cash for participants as an extra incentive.

**MB:** Do you have any idea of what you're going to

find?

**TC:** I honestly don't know what I'm going to find. I'm interested in seeing if any of the trends I have seen in America will cross over to Australia. Young individuals in Australia have different connotations, lower expectations of college, and what they will be doing after. This concept is very different from students in America. I am interested to see what the contrast is going to be. I will be asking the same questions, with the goal of seeing how the answers differ, and then perhaps adjust my questions accordingly to really see major themes.

**MB:** Is this research going to be used as a comparative to your past work, or is it for new topics that you are working on?

**TC:** I hope to use the data from Australia for a third book that I am starting to think about. Aside from doing these interviews and research in Australia, I will also have time to work on this idea for a book as well as do most of the writing for a second book. This research assignment will give me the opportunity to finish both books by the time I return to campus.

**MB:** When do you expect to be returning to TCNJ?

**TC:** If everything goes the way it should, I will be working on these topics for 3 semesters.

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**MB:** What are your plans at TCNJ once you return?

**TC:** When I come back, I want to bring a different type of research program to the school. I've focused a lot on transitions, from high to college specifically, but I want to shift and perhaps focus on a person's transition into retirement, or the final transition of

dying. This concept is very interesting to me because many people do not realize the amount of religion or spirituality assigned with this 'fating' or the process of dying, which many people now have the awareness of and have to make choices in regards. This is all down the line, but I am very interested in pursuing it.

We wish you luck with your research, Dr. Clydesdale!

### The Art of Persistence

By Stephanie Torres

My time at TCNJ has been a roller coaster. I have experienced the highs and lows of being a college student. The stress mounts when reading assignments and papers start to pile up. Even with all of the mounds of work I never gave up. Even when classes seemed so difficult I could cry, I never could throw in the towel. I discovered persistence was essential to my academic career. Persistence allowed me to stick through all of my classes with optimism and faith. Next to the sociology capstone, one of the most intense courses that Sociology majors will face, is Research Methods SOC 302.

I can recall my time in SOC 302, with Dr. Diane Bates. Looking back this class was extremely rewarding and enabled me to be a persistent student. There were plenty of times when I became frustrated with SPSS, my research variables, and of course

writing papers A-D. I found myself reading Chambliss and Schutt's *Making Sense of the Social World* several times a week, re-checking my variables on the GSS website, and meeting with Dr. Bates with all my questions concerning my research papers. What at first seemed to be impossible became possible. As the semester progressed, I began using SPSS and research jargon quite frequently, which was a sign to me that I was gaining understanding in the course. Yes, it's true all of my persistence paid off in the end. For all of the upcoming SOC 302 students, I encourage you to be persistent. Never give up because something is difficult; rather gear up for the challenge with persistence.

For all of the upcoming SOC 302 students, I encourage you to be persistent.

### The Link Between Education and Sociology

By Cynthia Antunes

Most people are surprised to find out that I am an elementary education major whose second major is sociology. I took a sociology course my senior year of high school and immediately thought of taking sociology in college. People often ask why I did not choose math, history, or another of the regular school subjects. I usually get a version of this question: *Why sociology, what does it have to do with teaching kids?* Some people ask me: *Wouldn't it be more beneficial to major in something else?* At first even I had some doubts about keeping sociology as my second major.

Now I am a junior and continue to be an elementary education and sociology major, and I am very glad that I didn't decide to change my second major. I have taken about seven sociology courses so far and no longer question my decision. The courses, both my core courses

and sociology electives, have illustrated a clear connection between sociology and education. I am confident that my background in sociology will help me with my teaching career. If you are an education major or if you plan on working with children, these courses are good examples of courses that relate to education:

#### Community, City, and Suburbs SOC 320

This is a great course to take for anyone who may be interested in someday teaching in an urban setting. This course mainly examines individuals search for community by leaving the city and moving into the suburbs. The course also looks at the downsides of living in the suburbs, especially the negative effects for children. The course mainly focuses on how to improve cities so people will move back into the cities and how cities are

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actually beneficial for children. Part of this requires an investigative research assignment, which students can choose to do on whatever they would like to investigate.

#### Urban Youth Deviance SOC 310 or Social Deviance SOC 210

These courses examine deviant behavior and the reasons for this kind of behavior. Again, these two courses are great to take especially if one is interested in working in an urban setting. Many times people have their own perceptions and beliefs about people based on their behavior, but these courses look at why people behave the way they do by using socio-

logical concepts and theories.

#### Body Image, Culture, and Society SOC 333

This course is important especially for people who plan to teach at the middle school level or higher. This course examines society's ideals of the body and the negative impact these ideals have on young men and women today. This course will help future students understand the need for many young people to turn to extreme diets, fad diets, or leads to eating disorders. It is important for future teachers to be able to not only understand these, but also be attuned to these ideas so they can help or get help for their own students.

### Urban Planning

Sometimes being a sociology major can be overwhelming. There are so many options for after graduation, like graduate school or going into the workforce, and there are many industries in which a sociology degree is helpful.

As I navigate my way through post-graduate options, I am continually drawn to the urban planning field. The sociology department periodically offers the class "Introduction to Urban Planning," which is part of the urban and ethnic studies concentration, and I took it last semester with Dr. Bierbaum. Dr. Bierbaum was the former director of TCNJ's Municipal Land Use Center and even though he's gone, the influence of the class has stayed with me.

Urban planning, according to our friends at Wikipedia, integrates land use planning and transportation planning to improve the built and social environments of communities. If you're interested in public policy and how people's physical environments shape their way of life, urban planning is the track for you!

### Helping Others

On October 20, 2009 Peter Singer, the author of *The Life You Can Save*, attended the college to discuss the importance of helping the world's poor. At the beginning of the lecture he presented the audience with a question; would you save a boy drowning in the lake, even if it meant sacrificing your brand new pair of shoes? The majority of people would answer yes. He challenged the au-

By Madeline Patrick

So, if you've decided you want to pursue a career in urban planning, there are a few options. If you're interested in going to graduate school, Planetizen has a list of the top urban planning graduate programs in the U.S. on their website. Nearby Rutgers University is number four on the list!

If graduate school isn't what you've envisioned for your future, there are plenty of ways to go straight into the workforce. You can connect local governments and see if they are looking for interns in their planning department. This path is best if you want to gain experience for a higher-level position. You can even apply to centers like the National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment, the Center for Urban Policy Research, and Community Development Institute.

Urban planning is definitely a comprehensive and ever-expanding field of study. With so many options to enter the field, why not start planning for your future in urban planning?

By Erica Jungels

dience further by seeing how our answer changed if the child was farther away and starving instead of drowning. Most of us would still answer yes to saving the starving child; however, in reality many of us do not make efforts to do so. Peter Singer presented many excuses that people have for not acting including the

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bystander effect, which is not acting because you believe someone else will. He urged everyone to donate a portion of his or her salary to the world's poor. His figures demonstrated that if everyone donated money, the majority of the population would only need to donate one percent of our salary to raise 1.2 billion dollars.

Peter Singer's point of helping others should not be taken lightly. However, I believe that he placed too much emphasis on monetary efforts and the importance of helping non-industrialized nations. Often people do not have the money to donate, especially many of us who will be graduating in debt. Instead there are other ways that people can help and other needs people have. One significant way to help is by volunteering. Everyone has a skill that could be used to help others, whether it be helping with a fund raiser, helping build homes for the poor, or provid-

ing medical care. There are many people in this country suffering in some way that would greatly benefit from volunteers. Volunteering allows you to choose a cause that is important to you, whether it be poverty or finding a cure for cancer. It also gives you the ability to choose which population that you wish to help, for example, at-risk youth, the disabled, or the elderly. Volunteermatch.org is one website designed to help people find places to volunteer. On this website, you can search thousands of organizations based on the cause that you believe is important and in a location that is convenient. Helping others can be done on a more micro level. It is important to help friends, family and neighbors, whether it be cooking dinner for a neighbor or visiting the homebound. No matter how or who you can help, it is important to start making efforts, no matter how small, to helping others.

**Political Controversy in Bolivia, as Studied by Professor Miriam Shakow**

**By Emily Meltzer**

Dr. Miriam Shakow, a visiting professor of anthropology, is in the process of concluding a fourteen year research experience in central Bolivia. She initially traveled to Bolivia with the School for International Training in 1995, and has gone back to the country every summer since then. Dr. Shakow sought to discover the relationship between identity and political action by doing ethnographic field research. The research was largely qualitative, as Dr. Shakow interviewed citizens about their political ideology and participation and observed their daily lives to see how they dealt with the issues plaguing their communities.

The primary issues Dr. Shakow researched were the existence of conflicts in local governments and how those conflicts related to the problems of higher government structures. Bolivia has been experiencing a rise of leftist movement since the election in 2005 of an indigenous president, Juan Evo Morales Ayma. Bolivia saw a surge of money come in after the government began placing taxes on its exported natural resources. Citizens wonder where the money has gone, as they expected local governments to receive the money and relieve poverty. According to Dr. Shakow, there is a "swirling conflict of interpretations of where the money is going and why progress is not being made quickly."

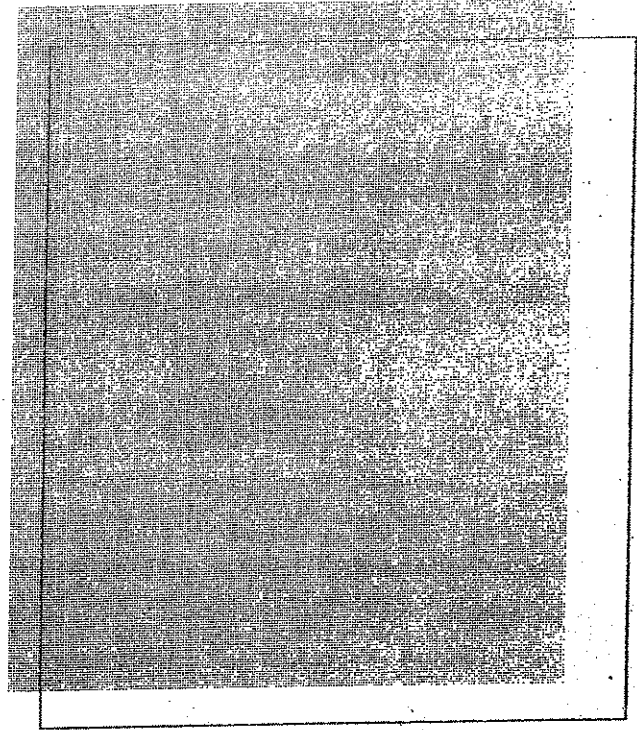
"There is a swirling conflict of interpretations of where the money is going and why progress is not being made quickly."

they did not build local infrastructure with the money they supposedly received from the Bolivian federal government. The conflicts in local governments are exacerbated by the fact that many of the citizens accusing the mayors of corruption may have ulterior motives of their own. These citizens are being blamed for removing mayors from office in order to secure power for their own politicians. The replacement politicians would in turn give jobs to the supporters who ensured their reception of mayoral positions. Citizens who allegedly take extreme measures to gain employment may do so because of the scarcity of jobs and resources in Bolivia.

Through her research, Dr. Shakow found that the controversy over corruption persisted because corruption is a hidden process. There is an assumption that transparency can be achieved because citizens have access to local government documents. However, the social inequality in Bolivia prevents most citizens from being able to decipher complicated governmental spending records. Dr. Shakow concluded that, unless greater social equality is achieved in Bolivia, transparency cannot be achieved and the potential for political corruption will always be present.

Dr. Shakow finished her dissertation in 2008, but she intends on researching other issues in Bolivia in the future. Her next research project will be centered on the association between teenagers and the fear of rising crime in the country.

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**Attention Sociology/Anthropology Majors, Minors, New Transfers, and Interested Students!**

The student members of Alpha Kappa Delta, International Sociology Honor Society would like to offer you the service of a peer mentor. Your mentor will be a junior or senior Sociology/Anthropology major who can assist you with any questions you may have regarding the major/minor, classes offered, double-majoring, or other topics you wish could be addressed with a peer. If for some reason your mentor cannot completely answer all of your questions throughout the course of the semester, he/she can point you in the right direction to find the answer.

We can match you with a mentor that shares research interests with you, is currently pursuing a concentration you are considering, has studied abroad in a country of interest to you, or has held an internship opportunity you hope to obtain in the future. Current mentors' interests cover a variety of areas in sociology including education, communications, environmental justice, public policy, cultural change, and health.

You can converse with your mentor by e-mail or AIM, on the phone, or even meet in person if you so choose. The flexi-

bility of this program and the dedication of the mentors to their coursework and scholarship make this commitment a great resource for you that will complement the assistance you receive from your faculty advisor.

If you are interested in having an AKD mentor, please e-mail Lisa Esposito ([esposito25@tcnj.edu](mailto:esposito25@tcnj.edu)), Erika Jungels ([jungels2@tcnj.edu](mailto:jungels2@tcnj.edu)), or Sarah Michlik ([michlik4@tcnj.edu](mailto:michlik4@tcnj.edu)), Co-Presidents of AKD the following information:

- Full name
- E-mail address
- Phone number
- Your program (major, minor)
- Your class year (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
- Concentration (either declared or one that is of interest to you)
- Any research interests you have and experiences you hope to aspire to

Thank you!

**SocioNews Fall 2009 Contributors:**

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