



*The Maverick Machine performed at the 2023 Chicago Thanksgiving Parade*

# HSS HIGHLIGHTS

## COLLEGE-WIDE NEWS

### HSS Insights: Faculty Interview Series

We are excited to announce the first episode of HSS Insights (adapted from the former SBS Insights series). HSS Insights is a series of conversations with faculty showcasing unique research and work focused on creativity, innovation, public service, and addressing social issues.

The latest episode features Dr. Fei Yuan, department chair and a professor of geography specializing in remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Her work used these tools to survey Woodlands Hills Cemetery and its historical records. During the process they mapped the cemetery and converted historical texts to digital records.



① [View the episode>>](#)

## Fall 2023 Homecoming Homecoming Parade

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences was represented by an amazing float designed by professors Pocket Toscani and Todd Shanafelt, along with students in the Department of Creative Arts. This year's homecoming theme was "Mavericks in Paradise." Students and faculty worked tirelessly to deliver a spectacular float once again.



## First "Mavericks on the Mall" Event

At this brand-new, family-friendly, community event, the College of Humanities and Social Science hosted a booth to promote the college and its programs. Even Provost David Hood stopped by to get in on the fun and snap a few pictures! The cast of "Rent" also made an appearance to promote their show. Finally, the Maverick Machine stopped by to hype everyone up for the game.



## HSS Advising Office Homecoming Decorating



The HSS Advising Office participated in the homecoming office decorating contest. With the theme "Mavericks in Paradise," they definitely made Armstrong Hall a little more tropical.

## To Vietnam and Back: A Veteran and Alumnus Story of War, Protest, Campus, and Beyond

In honor of Veterans Day, we were honored to host Vietnam War veteran and alumnus Bill Strusinski on Nov. 8 to share his story in a special interview-style event moderated by Randal Dietrich, executive director for the Minnesota Military Museum. The event celebrated Mr. Strusinski's story as a combat medic, college student, veteran, government official and lobbyist. Thanks to all who joined for a night of meaningful dialogue and inspiration. If you missed the presentation, a recording is available on our website.



2 [View the recording>>](#)

### Bonus Feature:

Vietnam and Back:  
Three Alumni  
Vietnam Vets Talk  
About Their Days  
on Campus After  
Serving.



3 [Read in the online edition of TODAY magazine >>](#)

## Minnesota State Mankato Names 2023 Luoma Leadership Program Grads



(L-R): Dr. Luis Posas, Linda Alvarez, Sheri Sargent, Dr. Gina Wenger, Anna Oachs, Dr. Matt Loayza

Six of Minnesota State Mankato colleagues completed the 18-month Luoma Leadership Academy program. Congratulations to these HSS professors on their accomplishment:

- Dr. Luis Posas, Sociology
- Dr. Gina Wenger, Creative Arts
- Dr. Matt Loayza, History



### READING A PAPER COPY?

Visit Page 20 for all the links featured in the newsletter. Look for the numbered icon.



## ANTHROPOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

### Dr. Donald Friend Invited to Partake in National Academy of Sciences Panel

This September, Dr. Donald Friend was invited to be on a panel at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in Washington, D.C. Other panel invitees included Ambassador Samantha Power, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). As a Jefferson Science Fellow of the NAS, Dr. Friend served AY 2019-2020 as Senior Science Advisor in the USAID Office of Global Climate Change.

Dr. Friend was invited to present aspects of his experience as a senior science advisor and his career developments since then. He also discussed future directions for the Jefferson Science Fellow program.

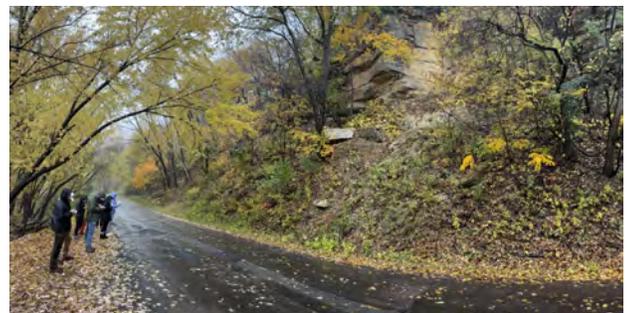


### High-Impact Learning in Undergraduate Geography Course

The Geomorphology class (GEOG 315) had a great fall field season as they embarked on several field trips to St. Croix River valley/North Shore of Lake Superior and the Minnesota River valley.

The trip to St. Croix and North Shore of Lake Superior was funded by the NSF FRES project. Students learned how to run ground penetrating radar, describe sediment cores, and made observations/ interpretations about the geoscience in the Lake Superior basin. Students visited Interstate State Park, the St. Croix Dells, and stopped to learn about catastrophic glacial meltwater flooding and the formation of the St. Croix River valley.

During the trip to Minnesota River valley, students assessed landslide risk within the Minnesota River valley tied to a prior EARTH Systems Lab project part of a statewide effort to assess landslide hazards.



④ [Learn more on this project >>](#)

## Former Undergraduate Successfully Defend Ph.D. Dissertation

Former undergraduate geography student, Dr. Austin Rau, successfully defended his dissertation “Extreme weather and mortality among a nationwide cohort of Veterans with COPD,” and earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota on Oct. 19. After earning his bachelor’s degree in Geography with a certificate in GIS in 2016, he went on to earn his master’s degree at the University of Iowa in 2018, and MPH at the University of Minnesota in 2020.



## Geography Graduate Student Participates in Outdoor Classroom Experience for High School Biology Students

Masaki Hara recently served as a community expert in an outdoor classroom experience at Minneopa State Park for Mankato East High School biology students.

This fantastic initiative was made possible through partnerships with Mankato East, Minnesota State, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and others.

Masaki is currently researching Aquatic Habitat and Land Cover Change for his master's thesis under mentorship from Dr. Friend, professor of in geography and Dr. Sue Colvin, professor of biology.



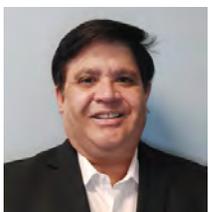
### Other Fall Semester Accomplishments



Masaki had many other notable accomplishments this semester:

- Served as a freshwater mussel survey and diver safety intern with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources from June to August 2023.
- Presented his work (poster presentation) at two conferences this fall:
  - 33rd MN GIS/LIS Consortium Annual Conference & Workshops
  - 2023 AAG Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division Annual Meeting
- Attended the Minnesota Water Resources Conference

## Journal of Criminal Justice Education Book Review



A book review by geography professor, Dr. José Javier López, was accepted for publication in the Journal of Criminal Justice Education. This review is about Groff & Haberman's “Understanding Crime and Place: A Methods Handbook.”

## COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

### Music Industry Major Receives Prestigious Award



Bailey Frerichs, a Music Industry major, received a dedicated award from Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union, the marquee sponsor of a Live Nation venue, designated for local college students pursuing a career related to the music industry. Only six students from colleges across the United States pursuing music industry careers were selected for this scholarship!

### Speech and Debate Team Missouri Mule Tournament

In October, the Speech and Debate Team competed in the Missouri Mule tournament at the University of Central Missouri. Here were the results:

#### International Public Debate Association

- Novice Octafinalist - Sebastian Emeline

#### Lincoln-Douglas Debate

- Novice Champion - Aiden Landgraff
- 4th Novice Speaker - Sydney Hawkins
- 5th Novice Speaker - Sebastian Emeline

#### Individual Event

- Open Poetry 3rd - E. Meier



### Check out the Curiosity Podcast

The Curiosity Podcast is a new podcast series produced by amazing students in the Department of Communication and Media with the support of Dr. David Engen.

- ⑤ [Read more on the Curiosity Podcast >>](#)



## CREATIVE ARTS

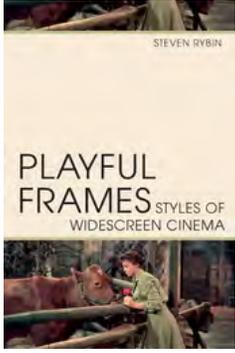
### Student-Created, Environment-Themed Sculpture Piece on Display



Abby Lundebrek created the “Corruption (2023)” sculpture out of everyday trash and other materials manipulated into unrecognizable forms and then added recognizable found objects to the sculpture, including artificial turf and a playground dome. It was designed to show the veil through which we see our environment.

Abby said her goal as an artist is to seamlessly meld found objects into fabricated ones, where the viewer cannot tell what is bought and what is created.

## Film Studies Professor Publishes Book and Receives Fellowship Grant



Professor Steve Rybin had his latest book, “Playful Frames: Styles of Widescreen Cinema,” published by Rutgers University Press.

He was also the recipient of the Hubert I. Cohen Fellowship, a \$3,000 award from the University of Michigan, for the purpose of visiting the University of Michigan to study the Alan and Joyce Rudolph papers in the Screen Makers and Mavericks Special Collection.

## Creative Arts Professors Selected as 2024 MN State Arts Board Creative Individuals Grant Recipients

Professors Josh Winkler and Areca Roe were selected for 2024 MN State Arts Board Creative Individuals Grants.



⑥ [Read more on grant recipients >>](#)

## Open Mic Series – Writers Bloc

MFA students, alum, and faculty read from their work at the first Writers Bloc of the year.



## Creative Writing Notables:

- The Good Thunder Reading Series received a \$9,000 grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council for programming for the 2023-24 season.
- Creative Writing MFA Alum Tina Gross recently published her poem "Conference Apocalypse" in Salamander Magazine.
- Professor Michael Torres (alum and faculty) has poetry forthcoming in Huizache.
- Creative Writing MFA alum Thomas Maldonado recently published his poem "The Camps of Shedheer" in Latino Literatures and an essay, titled "El Paso, That Place With All the 'Greasy Mexicans,'" in Erato Magazine.
- Sociology undergraduate alum José Felipe Ozuna was awarded a Loft Mentor Series Fellowship from The Loft Literary Center.
- Creative writing undergraduate alum Hannah Penttila will have her chapbook, which started as a project while a student at Minnesota State Mankato, published by Bottlecap Press.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### Community Correction Students Participate in a Mock Trial during “Class in the Courtroom” Day

Blue Earth County hosted a mock trial for Minnesota State University Mankato Community corrections class. Students got real-world experience participating in the mock trial that eventually ended up in a hung jury.



### Dr. Pat Nelson Interviewed by KSTP

In August, Dr. Pat Nelson was interviewed by a reporter from KSTP regarding the Minneapolis City Attorney’s Office plans to investigate three separate complaints filed against Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O’Hara.



### Let's Talk CJ Podcast

Join the Department of Criminal Justice in their new podcast as they explore a variety of hot topics related to courses, programs and majors in the department.



7 [Read more on the interview >>](#)

8 [Listen to the podcast >>](#)

### Dr. Sue Burum Delivers Paper at the National Social Science’s Conference

Dr. Sue Burum attended the National Social Science’s fall virtual conference Oct. 23 and delivered a paper entitled “Student Loan Forgiveness: The Twist and Turn Dance.”



## ECONOMICS, ETHNIC STUDIES, AND GOVERNMENT

### Dr. Russell Fricano Co-Authors an Article

This past September, Dr. Russell Fricano, faculty of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute, co-authored an article, published by Sage Journal, titled “Environmental Justice for Whom? Citizen Participation and Brownfield Redevelopment in Downtown Birmingham, Alabama.”



9 [Read more on the article >>](#)

## Urban and Regional Studies Institute Graduate Students Makes News for Their Capstone Project

Five graduate students who are part of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute, are developing a plan to rejuvenate Depot Park as part of their capstone project. This caught the attention of the news site, Kenyon Leader, who published an article detailing their plan.

⑩ [Read more on the article >>](#)

## Dr. Beth Heidelberg Featured on Podcast About “Dark Tourism”

Dr. Beth Heidelberg spoke on a podcast and produced an article about the impact of dark tourism on local government for the Local Government Information Unit, a United Kingdom organization that provides technical support and research for local governments in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and Australia.

⑪ [Listen to the podcast >>](#)



## Government Professor, Dr. Tomasz Inglot, Presents New Book

Dr. Tomasz Inglot, presented his new book "Mothers, Families or Children, Family Policy in Poland, Hungary and Romania, 1945-2020, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022)" at the University of Padova, Italy, on May 15. He also was the keynote lecturer at the debate on Polish family policy in Warsaw, Poland, on Sept. 5.



## Thomas Maldonado, Publishes a Personal Essay

Thomas Maldonado, instructor of the Intensive English Program and Creative Writing alum, published a personal essay, “El Paso, That Place With All the 'Greasy Mexicans'” in Erato Magazine, Sept. 18, 2023.

⑫ [Read the article >>](#)

## More Creative Writing News and Accomplishments

The Creative Writing faculty and students had a very successful semester. Here are some of their accomplishments:

- Faculty emeriti, Richard Terrill, recently published his essay, "The Deepening Sky" in Forum.
- Faculty emeriti, Richard Robbins, had poems, "The Small Price" and "The Light in Cusco" published in Aji.
- Undergraduate alum, José Felipe Ozuna, was awarded a Loft Mentor Series fellowship.
- MFA alum, A.E. Wynter, is The Carolyn Moore Writer in Residence for November.
- MFA alum, Lissa Horneber, has an essay forthcoming in Pleiades titled "Bearings."
- MFA Faculty, Rachael Hanel's essay "How to Do Sirsasana (Headstand)" was published in Stonecoast Review.
- Faculty Chris McCormick, friend of the program Mairead Small Staid, and MFA alum Lissa Horneber read from new work at a reading with support from respective Minnesota State Arts Boards grants at the Carnegie Art Center on Sept. 23.

## HISTORY AND GENDER STUDIES

### Social Studies Education Students Selected to Attend Colonial Williamsburg's Teachers Institute



Social Studies Education majors, Jack Baumbach and Abbey Botko, were selected to attend the Colonial Williamsburg's Teachers Institute. The institute is a national program for 7th-12th grade professional teachers and has a highly competitive application process. Minnesota State University, Mankato is the only university in the nation that is allowed to send pre-service teachers and has done so since 2016. With the quality of students from Minnesota State Mankato from the past few years, two college students were able to attend this year.

<sup>13</sup> [Learn more about the Colonial Williamsburg's Teachers Institute >>](#)

### History Graduate Student Named to Special Negro Leagues and Teams Committee

Paul Spyhalski, a history graduate student, has been named to the Special Negro Leagues and Teams Committee, one of more than 30 scholars and historians appointed to provide recommendations on Black baseball teams and leagues by Opening Day 2024. Paul is a historian of Black baseball history and has published in the field.

## Social Studies Education Students Present at History Fest



Social Studies Education students, Jack Baumbach and Abbey Botko, presented at the History Fest Conference on what they learned at the Colonial Williamsburg Teachers' Institute that they both attended this past July. This marks the first time college students have been invited to present their own session at this conference.

History Fest is a conference for K-12 teachers at the MN History Center each August. It is sponsored by the MN Historical Society and the MN Council for History Education.

## Dr. Lori Lahlum Awarded 2023 Dakota Conference Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Northern Plains

Dr. Lori Ann Lahlum received the 2023 Dakota Conference Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Northern Plains. For the past 20 years, just one person has received the award each year. Recipients include some of the leading scholars of South Dakota and Northern Great Plains history, as well as people actively engaged in the preservation of local history and those who encourage student research. All share a commitment to the conference and the region. Dr. Lahlum has mentored students at Minnesota State Mankato and Valley City State University to share their work at the conference. Additionally, Dr. Lahlum served as a panelist and moderated the William E. Lass memorial session at the NGPHC and provided comment on a WHA MA thesis proposal lightning roundtable.



[14 View all recipients of this award >>](#)

## Social Studies Education Students Attend Japanese American Historical Association Workshop



In October, Landis Parham and Jack Baumbach went to the Through Our Eyes: People of Japanese Ancestry from Mass Incarceration to Segregation in 1940s America for 4th-12th grade humanities, history, and social studies teachers, in the Twin Cities. This was a workshop sponsored by the National Parks Service and the National Japanese American Historical Association. They were the only two pre-service teachers allowed to attend this event.

## History Graduate Students Presents Research at 2023 Northern Great Plains History Conference

Carly DeLeu (History, M.A. 2025), Brett Neel (History, M.S. 2025), and Paul Spyhalski (History, M.A. 2025) shared their research at the 2023 Northern Great Plains History Conference in Sioux Falls. Carly presented a paper based upon her thesis research on German Methodists in Minneapolis and participated on a panel about teaching history. Brett, a secondary teacher in Minnesota, also served on the teaching history roundtable that Dr. Jameel Haque organized. Paul talked about railroad expansion into western South Dakota.

Carly DeLeu went on to receive the Honorable Mention prize for the William E. Lass Award for the paper she presented.



*(L-R): Dr. Jameel Haque, Carly DeLeu, Brett Neel*

The Lass Award (in honor of Minnesota State Mankato Professor Emeritus William E. Lass) goes to the best student paper presentation at the conference from the region encompassing Professor Lass's research: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

## Dr. Matt Loayza's Teaches "Sport, History, and International Diplomacy" Course at ITESO Jesuit University of Guadalajara

From May 29-June 8, Dr. Matt Loayza traveled to the ITESO (the Jesuit University of Guadalajara) campus to co-teach a course entitled "Sport, History, and International Diplomacy" with ITESO Professor Enrique Aguirre Torres. This was part of a four-week course that Dr. Loayza submitted as an accepted proposal back in August 2022 for ITESO's Summer International Program. Dr. Loayza devoted much time since September 2022 to prepping and teaching the course while also helping to develop a partnership between the two universities. Dr. Loayza developed the course with a global audience in mind and has utilized the international students' feedback with revisions. A full-semester version of the class was offered at Minnesota State University this fall.



## PERFORMING ARTS

### Recent Theater Graduate Reconnects with Professor at Summer Performance

Recent MFA in Theater graduate, RJ Magee, had the wonderful opportunity to be in a production of “Anything Goes” with the Black Rock Theater in Fairfield, Connecticut from June 16-25. Being in the area at the time, director of choral activities and assistant professor in the Department of Performing Arts, Dr. Elisabeth Cherland reconnected with her former student to watch his performance. She and her family had a great time at the performance and said RJ was wonderful in the show.



### Minnesota NATS Student Auditions

Dr. Stephanie Thorpe took four students to the Minnesota National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Student Auditions at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN: Current Minnesota State Mankato Abigail Shogren (Vocal Music Education), Finnola Coughlin (Theatre Arts), and Billy Krager (Music Education Vocal, along with St. Peter High School Student Rebekah Roemhildt.

#### Results:

- Finnola received first place in the Upper College Musical Theatre Treble division.
- Billy received first place in the Advanced Classical TTB division.
- Bekah received third place in the Lower High School Musical Theatre Treble division.
- Abigail performed well in the very competitive Upper Level Classical Treble division.

Dr. Thorpe is now the past president of Minnesota NATS, after serving two, two-year terms.



*Dr. Thorpe with Billy Krager*



*Dr. Thorpe with Rebekah Roemhildt*



*Dr. Thorpe with Finnola Coughlin*

### Guest Artist Brings Cuban and Latin Dance Specialty to Students

Yenieli ‘Chini’ Perez Domenech was the guest artist and teacher in Professor Daniel Stark’s Afro-Cuban dance class on Nov. 3. He is a dancer and teacher from the Twin Cities, specializing in Cuban and other a Latin dances.



## Performing Arts Fall 2023 Shows



### Annual “Dress Like Dan Day”

On Nov. 17 students enjoyed the annual tradition of “Dress Like Dan Day,” in honor of Prof. Dan Stark’s birthday. According to alumni comments to the photo on social media, this tradition dates back to 2012. We’ll let you determine who the “real” Dan Stark is in this photo.

### Theatre Arts Alum Visits Campus, Hosts Workshops for Students

Alum and Los Angeles-based actor Spencer Kramber was on campus in November offering workshops for theatre students. This was an incredible opportunity for students.



## Dakota Language Students Compete in Cansayapi Dakota Language Bowl



Students in the Dakota Language Program (101 and 201 classes) took home first and fourth place in the adult beginner category in the Cansayapi Dakota Language Bowl at the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

Participating students were Myles Flack, Henry Bowring-McDonough, Adebowale Ogunleye, Joe Rodgers, Evan Birkland, Aiden Landgraff and John Arnoldy, pictured here with their instructor, Professor Glenn Wasicuna, and competition judge Harold Blacksmith from Sioux Valley Dakota Reserve in Manitoba.

## Dr. Sun Kyeong Yu Gives Talks in Korea, Publishes Paper and Book Review

Dr. Sun Kyeong Yu gave two talks in Korea in October. The first talk titled "The Buddhist Teaching of Dependent Arising and Impermanence in Darwin's Theory of Evolution" was given for the lecture series "The Buddha: Big Questions" hosted by Bulkwang, the largest publisher of Buddhist literature in Korea, on Oct. 15. The second talk titled "How Bioscience Meets Buddhism" was given for the Meet-the-Authors Open Lecture Series organized by the Foundation for the Promotion of Korean Buddhism on Oct. 17. Both talks will be aired on television and later uploaded to YouTube.

Dr. Yu also published a paper titled "Sudden Enlightenment: Paradigm-Shifting Awakening" in American Philosophical Association's Studies on Asian and Asian Philosophers and Philosophies in May 2023. She published a book review paper titled "Non-Self from the Logical Point of View: Book review on Non-Self, There Is No Such Self" in The Buddhist Review, Korea, in Sept. 2023.



⑮ [Read more on the article >>](#)

### Industrial-Organizational Psychology Graduate Program Travels to Washington D.C.



The Industrial-Organizational Psychology master's program recently visited Washington, D.C. This trip included site visits to Amazon and FMP. Students also received a tour of the Capitol (from a staffer who is the brother of a current student) and an opportunity to network with alumni in the area.

### I-O Psychology Master's Program Named "Intelligent Pick"

The I-O Psychology master's program has been recognized by Intelligent.com as the top "Intelligent Pick." According to Intelligent.com, this rating is based on "Academic quality, graduation rate, cost and ROI, and student resources. Our top picks are highly-regarded, affordable, and offer the tools and resources students need to successfully graduate and excel in their fields."

16 [View the website >>](#)

### Clinical Psychology Graduates Have Theses Published in Academic Journals

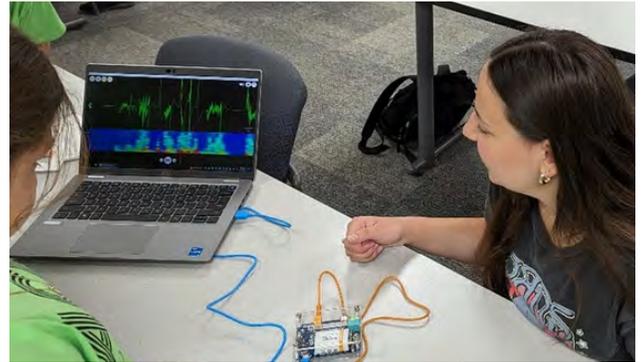
Class of 2021 Clinical Psychology graduate student, Todd Jennings, had his thesis "Therapist multicultural orientation: Client perceptions of cultural humility, LGB identity, and the working alliance" published in the Journal of Homosexuality in Fall 2023. Jennings is currently a doctoral student at University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

17 [Learn more about the thesis >>](#)

Samuel Danielson's thesis, "Satanists' Sexual Self-Concept" was published in the journal Sexual & Relationship Therapy. Both Todd Jennings and Samuel Danielson are recent graduates from the Clinical Psychology master's program and worked under Dr. Eric Sprankle.

## Psychology Professors Presents Psychological Sciences at Summer STEM Camp

Psychology professors Drs. Karla Lassonde, Adam Steiner, and Emily Stark presented demonstrations of psychological science at a summer STEM camp for children enrolled in the ACES program. The attendees learned about perception, memory, and the brain. Here, undergraduate research assistant, Abbey Pilger, helps demonstrate EEG physiological recordings.



## SOCIOLOGY

### Sociology Professors, Dr. Aaron Hoy and Dr. Sachita Pokhrel, Have Blog Post Reprinted

Dr. Aaron Hoy, Jori Nkwenti (M.A. Sociology, 2022), and Sachita Pokhrel (Sociology/Psychology Major), had their blog post, "Divorce Anxiety? For Sexual Minority Young Adults, Not So Much," reprinted in the Third Edition of "Families as They Really Are" (W.W. Norton & Company, 2024). Their blog post was originally published by the Council on Contemporary Families in 2022.

18 [View the blog post>>](#)

### Sociology Professor, Dr. Afroza Anwary, Presents Two Papers

Dr. Afroza Anwary presented her paper, "Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: An Analysis of the Rohingya Refugee Problems and Environmental Sustainability," at the Midwest Sociological Society annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN, March 23-26, 2023. The paper was co-authored by Mohammad Mohiuddin, University of Ferrara, Italy.



Dr. Anwary also presented her paper, "Experiencing Gender Based Violence in Genocide of Rohingyas of Myanmar," at the American Sociological Association annual meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Aug. 17 – 21.

### Dr. Sarah Epplen was Interviewed by The Today Show

In September, Dr. Sarah Epplen was interviewed by a reporter from Today.com (the website for The Today Show) about a reality star's decision to give her baby her own last name instead of her partner's.

19 [View the interview>>](#)



## Sociology Students' Drive to get Echo Food Shelf on Bus Route

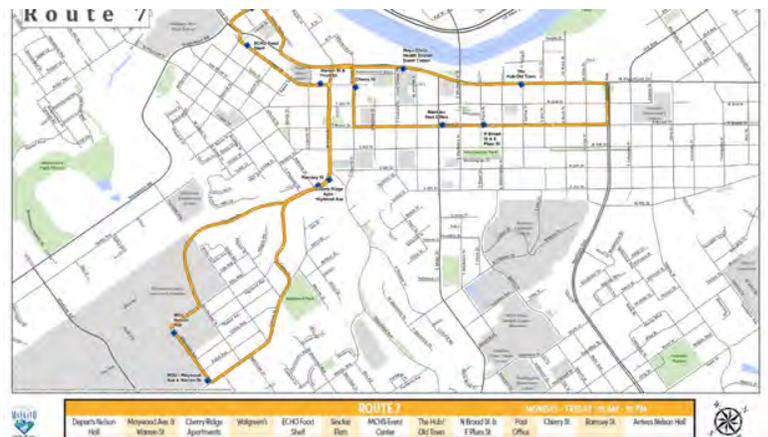
The Echo Food Shelf was added to the Downtown Express Route 7 on Monday, Nov. 20. This route is much more convenient to students in need. Route 7 is totally financed by Mankato Area Transit and is not part of the student subsidized "U-Zone" bus routes up on the hill by campus.

Sociology professor, Dr. Carol Glasser, along with her students have been working on the food insecurity and transportation issues in Mankato. Mitchel Pomije, especially, worked hard and spoke at the city's transportation summit and won the best student paper award from the Sociologists of Minnesota for some of this research.

Dr. Glasser and Mitchel attended multiple focus group and listening session with the region 9 city planners and presented at a local transportation summit. One of the recommendations from these studies was to extend a bus route to Echo Food Shelf and has been adopted by the city. This was due in large part not only to the research but to the persistent advocacy and education efforts the students engaged in.

"This is truly what sociology is," said Dr. Glasser, "Social justice through a combination of studying an issue, conducting research to understand the issue, and engaging in advocacy based on that knowledge!"

*Mitchel Pomije (center)  
with his advisor Dr.  
Sarah Epplen (right) and  
his research mentor Dr.  
Carol Glasser (left)*



## Students Attend Sociologists of Minnesota Conference



Sociology students attended the Sociologists of Minnesota - SOM conference at Gustavus Adolphus College on Oct. 13.

## Social Justice Lecture Series Features Events “For the Birds”

On Nov. 1, The Raptor Center showcased four different raptors found in Minnesota and discussed conservation issues that can impact their well-being. This event was the first in a three-part series of “For the Birds” events are presented by the Social Justice Lecture Series with the support from Department of Sociology, Department of Philosophy, Languages and Cultures, Sociology Club and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Other events included “Birding for Everyone” with presenter May Vang from the Minnesota DNR’s Bird by Bird Project, and an Invasive Plants Clean-Up day at Minneopa State Park.



## Scholars Serving Time Program Celebrates Its Graduates

Congratulations to our two graduating classes of Minnesota State Mankato’s Scholars Serving Time Program. Graduates of the program earned their associate degree from the University.

On Jan. 26, 2022 the program held a graduation recognition event at men’s correctional facility in Faribault. There were 8 graduates (one was unable to attend). This was a facility-led ceremony that only allowed four Minnesota State Mankato faculty to attend.



Jan. 2022 Graduates

On July 13, 2023 a commencement ceremony that was led by the University within the Shakopee facility. This is believed to be the first university-led commencement in Minnesota to takeplace within a prison. Provost David Hood led the ceremony and conferred degrees. Dr. Timothy Berry, Interim Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs & Equity Initiatives, served as the keynote speaker. Assistant Vice Chancellor Jesse Mason from the Minnesota State System Office also attended and participated in congratulating students as they received their degrees. Faculty who taught at the facility over the last couple years also attended. Graduates were able to invite family members and each had the opportunity to speak briefly about their experience in the program.



July 2023 Graduates

# Quirky QUERIES

Before you go... let's have a little fun! In every edition, we throw a curveball at our HSS faculty with an off-the-wall question.

*If you were to choose a song that would play every time you entered a meeting, what song would you pick and why?*



**Dr. Chris Brown, Dean**

I would start the meeting with “Welcome to the Jungle” by Guns N Roses and then I would end the meeting with “Livin’ on Prayer” by Bon Jovi. I then would go back to my office and listen to “Waterfalls” by TLC, and then drive home playing “Fast Cars” by Traci Chapman ... and as I get closer to home, I would play “Freeway of Love” by Aretha Franklin.



**Dr. Chip Panahon, Interim Associate Dean**

My choice would be “One Love” by Bob Marley. I believe the song puts most people in a good mood when they hear it. As a faculty member, I usually play this song before my first lecture of every semester.



# CHECK OUT THE LINKS FEATURED IN THE NEWSLETTER

1



[HTTPS://HSS.MNSU.EDU/INSIGHTS](https://hss.mnsu.edu/insights)

2



[HTTPS://HSS.MNSU.EDU/TO-VIETNAM-AND-BACK](https://hss.mnsu.edu/to-vietnam-and-back)

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5



[HTTPS://WWW.MSUREPORTER.COM/2023/09/19/CURIOSITY-PODCASTERS-WANT-TO-BUILD-CONNECTIONS/](https://www.msureporter.com/2023/09/19/curiosity-podcasters-want-to-build-connections/)

6



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