

Seniors Become Extraordinary with the Practice of Research

Fisk University is grounded in sociological research. From W.E.B. DuBois to Charles S. Johnson, Fisk scholars have pioneered in areas of social research. Sociology students at Fisk continue in this legacy of research by developing and implementing current research projects. Projects range in topics from gender to music, urban and global affairs.

In February of 2009, six seniors traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, for the 27th annual SEUSS symposium hosted by Morehouse College and Emory University. Sharelle Armstrong, Tashaye Byrdson, Jonique Green, Tonja Khabir, Jacobi Simmons, and Alyssa Williams had the opportunity to present their sociological research. In the research paper competition, Tonja took 3rd place for her paper, entitled "Contact Culture and Conflict Linguistics on a Historically Black College Campus."



Tonja Khabir accepts her prize with Dr. Dani Smith



Sociology Seniors present at Morehouse College

Tonja also presented her research along with 12 other sociology seniors at the Inter-University Sociological Research Symposium at Vanderbilt University and at Student Research Day at Fisk University.

"Presenting my research was one of my proudest moments in college," senior Carolyn Jones said. "I really enjoyed presenting at Student Research Day because the poster served as a quick reference and made people immediately pay attention to my project before I even spoke. At Vanderbilt, I felt like a debut artist in my first major performance."

Student Research Day Winners

Tonja Khabir, 1st Place
Carolyn Jones, 2nd Place
Laurent Ewing, 3rd Place

All three students received a cash prize for their winning research posters.



Inspiring Research

When I came to Fisk, I was impressed by its rich history. Because of this, my favorite place on the campus quickly became the University's Special Collections located within the John Hope and Aurelia Franklin Library. One day while there, I met Dr. Licia Valladares, a sociologist from Brazil now teaching in France. Dr. Valladares came to Fisk to research the Fisk connection to Brazilian sociology. Her research focused on Sociologist Robert Park, for whom the primary academic building Park-Johnson was named. One of Park's graduate students was instrumental in developing Brazilian sociology. Park visited his student in Brazil while a professor at Fisk. Dr. Valladares was interested in finding information on the course that Dr. Park team-taught with this student at Fisk and those who funded his trip to Brazil. I was interested in her research and was given the opportunity to assist her in archival research after her visit ended. In looking through the archives, I realized that Fisk was definitely a place for research opportunities.



Candace Warren in Special Collections

Careers in Research

Sociologist Michael Fleming joined Fisk as Vice President for Institutional Assessment and Research this year. Dr. Fleming, a Morehouse College graduate, earned a Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA. On February 5, 2009, he spoke to the Sociology Club about non-teaching career options for the Ph.D. He talked about career choices and the importance of sociological understanding. Dr. Fleming is interested in continuing his doctoral research on African American males in higher education, that he hopes will result in a book on the topic. At Fisk University, Dr. Fleming is responsible for assessment at all levels.



Dr. Michael Fleming

Practicum Meets Research

Senior Drea Pryor interned at the Kelly Miller Smith Center Against Abusive Behavior last spring. She assisted with counseling sessions for men and women charged with domestic violence and court-ordered to attend a 26-week anger-management class. The class focused on how to identify and control anger. She helped the rehabilitation counselors prepare for the three one-hour sessions held on Saturday mornings. She was even afforded the opportunity to conduct four sessions. "Working with the clients, I saw they were individuals who had made a mistake", she said. "I got to see domestic violence from the aggressor's perspective."



Drea Pryor and Dr. Ruth Dennis
Practicum Supervisor.

The internship fueled Drea's desire to conduct research on domestic violence for her senior seminar research project, "Intimate Partner Violence: A Male Perspective." Drea examined and described the characteristics of the 60 male domestic violence offenders who participated in the intervention program. She analyzed the information provided by the program participants. Of several findings, she found that the offenders were primarily young, single, and high school graduates. Only 12 percent had personally experienced abuse as children. As a result of the practicum, Drea decided on the career goal of becoming a rehabilitation counselor and working with both youths and adults.

Dr. Shirley Rainey, Associate Professor of Sociology, has supervised the practicum course for the past two years. In addition to placing students at the Kelly Miller Smith Center Against Abusive Behavior, students have also worked with the following agencies: Centennial Medical Center, Boys & Girls Club, and Nashville Urban Planning. The purpose of the practicum is to allow students to apply the theories and methods learned in the classroom to the everyday world. Senior Karah Adams said working at the Boys & Girls Club "helped me a lot. I feel that we need to get practice somewhere before we enter the real world. I see it as a head start."



Learning Through Service

In the summer of 2008, sophomore sociology major Angela Addae served as a congressional intern for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., chaired by Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS). Thompson stated, "I'm extremely proud to have Angela working with the Committee on Homeland Security. She has quickly demonstrated her ability to adapt to a fast-paced work environment and a passion for securing our nation."

"Interning on Capitol Hill was a challenging, yet rewarding experience," says Angela. "I worked hands-on in the legislative process, alongside Congressman Thompson's amazing staff. This opportunity has enabled me to enhance my leadership and teamwork skills, as well as determine my career path." Angela's interests and her dedication to serving her community motivated her to serve as a congressional intern. She hopes to eventually return to Capitol Hill, to continue her work in public service and impacting the legislative process.

Currently, Angela is among a group of seven Fisk students spending the Spring 2009 semester at the University of Ghana. While in Ghana, Angela volunteers at B.A.S.I.C.S (Brothers and Sisters in Christ Serving) International, a non-governmental organization that promotes the education of street children by providing funding for school tuition and after-school programs. Angela's experiences in D.C. and Ghana have influenced her to seek a Ph.D.



Tashaye Byrdsong

Double the Advantage ☆ ☆

Tashaye Byrdsong is a graduating senior majoring in business administration and sociology. Being a sociology major allows her to try and make sound business decisions without compromising the

lives of others. "Sometimes I'm the only person in the class that opposes relocating an entire town to build a multi-million dollar plant," she says. She credits sociology with giving her an entirely new way to view the world.

Tashaye wants to become an Urban Planner. This is a profession that unites her business acumen and compassionate spirit. The discipline of sociology has taught her to interpret data, evaluate spatial arrangements, and understand the impact of demographics.

Tashaye serves as the Senior Class President where she effectively leads using the skills gained in both business and sociology. She has created a mentorship program that pairs incoming freshmen with members of the senior class.

Urban sociology is of interest to two other joint majors and both chose senior seminar research topics related to that interest. Sociology and Spanish major Jonique Green centered her research on gentrification and sociology and psychology major Amber Clemons on informal gathering places which provide identities outside of home and work.

Jonique plans a career in urban policy and planning. She chose sociology in order to understand the many challenges faced by a global society. She hopes to assist inner-city families with issues related to gentrification.

Amber is also interested in the development of communities. She believes her two majors are related and go hand-in-hand. She says, "I do not want to limit myself to one specific outlook."

Crossing the Divide

Taking courses at partnering institutions, or cross registering, is an experience few Fisk students enjoy. Senior Sharelle Armstrong, however, has enrolled in several Vanderbilt courses, believing that this opportunity exposes her to different perspectives in her major. "Studying at Vanderbilt," she says, "has broadened my horizons and made me a stronger student." According to Sharelle, Fisk students can definitely compete on the same academic level as Vanderbilt students. Sharelle's choice of a senior seminar research project definitely developed from the courses on gender she completed at Vanderbilt. She studied media portrayals of women in eight magazines targeting young women.

Where Are They Going???

Graduate School 2009- 2010

Tashaye Byrdsong- Tennessee State University, Public Administration
Carolyn Jones- University of Louisville, Public Administration
Tonja Khabir- Morehouse School of Medicine, Public Health
Jacobi Simmons- Washington University in St. Louis, Social Work and Public Health
Alyssa Williams- Pennsylvania State University, Criminology

Summer Research Internships

Angela Addae- Summer Research at Emory University through the UNCF Mellon Program

Shanicia Goston- Summer Research Internship in Psychology at the University of Minnesota through the McNair Scholars Program

Tonja Khabir- Bio-Behavioral Statistical Research in Cape Town, South Africa through Pennsylvania State University- Minority Health International Research Training (PSU- MHIRT)



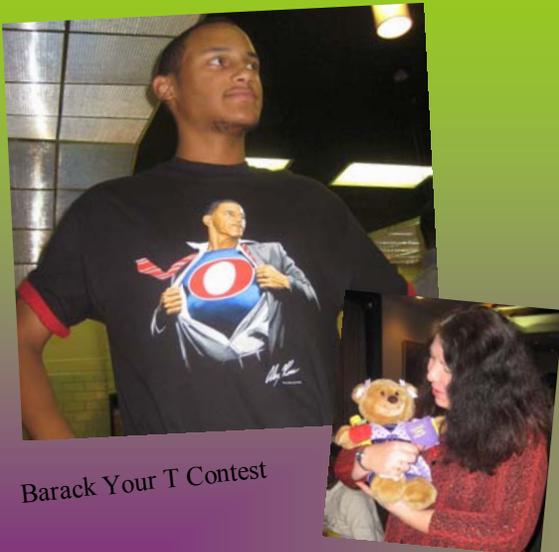
Shanicia Goston

Alpha Kappa Delta Inductees 2008-2009

Tashaye Byrdsong ~ Tonja Khabir ~ Jacobi Simmons

Stacy-Ann Baker ~ Suen Jeffery ~ Agnes Johnson

Sociology Club Fun



Barack Your T Contest

Annual Christmas Social
 Senior Gift to Dr. Smith

Expressions

Sociology majors display talent in many areas. Laurent Ewing is both a talented actor and artist. He performed lead in Fisk



Laurent Ewing

University's Stagecrafters fall production of *A Lesson Before Dying*. Laurent was also cast in the spring production of *Crowns*, which was performed by understudy and fellow sociology major, Joe Bazalais.

On April 15, Laurent also completed his first one man art show on the yard. His show was composed of over 50 pieces that reflected his passion and love for creative expression and African American culture.



AKD Inductee Stacy-Ann Baker

Sociology Club Officers

Tonja Khabir, Alyssa Williams, *Co-Presidents*
 Sharelle Armstrong, *Vice President*
 Candace Warren, *Secretary*
 Bianca Worthy, *Treasurer*
 Jonique Green, *Historian*
 Anastasia Monroe and Courtney Jones, *Senators*
 Drea Pryor, *Miss Sociology*

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