Sociology’s very own Candace Warren has been elected Miss Fisk 2010-2011. Some things she seeks to accomplish in her role as Miss Fisk are court-sponsored events, a Miss Fisk blog, and better communication. Her greatest hope for the legacy she will leave behind is that it will be one of “excellence” in her academic performance, court reign, and personal relationships with family, friends, mentors, and peers.

Though some people may see her as the title, she says she finds it inspiring to know that she can now have the influence of what her position holds. She says, “I still feel like Candace.” She believes through encouragement, hope, and faith, along with hard work, she can help improve upon what many before her have already built. She says it is the job of Miss Fisk to recruit and retain students and to build and maintain relationships.

Candace is a member of the W.E.B. DuBois General Honors Program and Alpha Kappa Delta, the sociology honor society. She is committed to her work as a student ambassador and with a campus ministry organization. She was secretary of the Sociology Club last year and is vice-president this year.

Candace aspires to earn a Ph.D. in sociology. Her topic of interest is the socialization of youth. Her goal, she states, is to “strategically assist international faith-based youth development non-profit organizations in their efforts to challenge and assist youth to succeed in life.”

Many Fiskites agree that Candace meets the standards of “The Fisk Woman.” Ever graceful and encouraging, her smile and accessibility are a welcoming feature. Candace is optimistic, exuberant, and conscientious; these three qualities brought her to the attention of the campus community as soon as she arrived on campus for the pre-college program. She says that the greatest challenge she faced here at Fisk was learning to believe in herself. Thanks to the high level of expectations of her professors and peers, Candace says she has confidence in herself and her abilities.
Dr. Shirley Rainey-Brown is a leading environmental justice activist and scholar. Dr. Rainey-Brown’s article “Grassroots Activism: Women and Their Role in the Environmental Justice Movement” has recently been published in the journal Race, Gender, & Class. The 2010 article, which was co-authored with Dr. Glenn Johnson of Clark Atlanta University, provides detailed insight into the significance of race and gender in the environmental justice movement—Dr. Rainey-Brown’s area of specialty.

Within the Environmental Justice paradigm, she also has published numerous articles on topics such as racism, toxic wells, and Hurricane Katrina and its impact on the students of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Also forthcoming in 2010 is Dr. Rainey-Brown’s Environmental Justice academic course textbook.

Dr. Rainey-Brown is currently conducting a case study on Macintosh, Alabama—a city she refers to as “an invisible community” that has become a victim of environmental racism. Dr. Rainey-Brown will be teaching a new course in her area of specialty in the fall, Sociology 345, Environmental Justice. The course will provide a general overview of the history, theoretical framework, and grassroots activism of the Environmental Justice Movement.

Though Dr. Rainey-Brown’s work keeps her busy, she was recently married and enjoys spending time with her three adult children.

The Fisk-Case Domestic Exchange Program, according to Jasmine, provided her the opportunity to “go away to college.” Although she lived in a dorm at Case, Jasmine’s home was only 10 miles from the campus. Jasmine said she appreciated learning more about her African American heritage at Fisk. She was also a fan of diversity. “I found the diversity among the student body to be very rewarding,” she said. “There were students here from across the United States as well as from the Caribbean Islands. I enjoyed the close-knit family environment and the welcoming atmosphere.” Jasmine said, “I also enjoyed the strong school spirit among the Fisk faculty and students, and of course the traditions. Simple things such as clapping for people when they drop a cup in the cafeteria, Opening Honors Convocation, coronation ceremony, and even the spirit walk, made Fisk memorable.”

Brittany was a participant in the Alternative Spring Break, a service project designed to help rebuild New Orleans. She considered the trip her most memorable experience at Fisk. Students, staff, faculty, and community members from Case Western and Fisk University volunteered for a week in New Orleans. “This experience was amazing because it united and created friendships that may have never existed,” Brittany said. “Furthermore, the New Orleans trip made me realize that the little things we do through volunteering truly make a difference in people’s lives. Each person that I talked to gained something from the trip from wanting to bring about social change, educate others, or become actively involved in their communities and around the world.” Brittany added, “I am grateful to have attended such a diverse institution.” Jasmine concluded, “I consider myself to be a spokesperson for this program because I tell everyone who is willing to listen about my experience.”

Jasmine accompanied the LEAD students on a trip to Case in Fall 2009. Bianca, Candace, and Charity received information on admissions, research opportunities, and met with the faculty in their programs of interest. They also attended a seminar on etiquette and visited a local middle school to speak about college life and to promote academic excellence. Alumni of Fisk, including Brandon Johnson, a 2008 Fisk graduate in business and sociology, who is completing a social work degree at Case, and other Case students provided insight on opportunities available at Case for Fisk students after graduation.
Student Research Day Sociology Award Winners
Agnes Johnson, First Place
Courtney Jones, Second Place
Suen Jeffery, Third Place

Exploring the World Through Social Research

Student research is an important focus of the sociology degree at Fisk. Seniors have three opportunities to present their senior seminar research projects each spring.

In 2010, eight sociology seniors presented their senior research projects at the 28th Southeastern Undergraduate Sociology Symposium held at Emory University in February. This was the third year Fisk seniors participated in SEUSS. The symposium featured presenters from 23 universities, both public and private, large research universities and smaller liberal arts colleges.

Their projects included one qualitative study on dating. Two students conducted surveys, both related to beauty. Two quantitative studies used existing statistics related to criminal justice issues. The other three quantitative studies were secondary analyses and the topics were drug use and education, parental influence on religiosity, and foster care and delinquency.

These eight students and three other sociology seniors prepared poster presentations for Fisk University’s Student Research Day. Since there were 11 presenters in the discipline, sociology received awards for first, second, and third place.

The Inter-University Undergraduate Sociology Research Symposium was held at Belmont University in April. The symposium was initiated in 2004 by Fisk University and the symposium rotates between the four universities in Nashville that offer undergraduate sociology degrees. Seven sociology seniors presented at the symposium.

Life After Fisk: An Update From A Recent Graduate

I have decided that I will be an advocacy planner. I am currently a graduate student at the University of Louisville's School of Urban and Public Affairs, and I am doing very well. In the fall, I will enroll in the University of Louisville Law School. I realize that the extra degree is imperative to my line of work. I am already involved with the Black Law Student's Association (BLSA) on campus. I will work on both degrees simultaneously, and I look forward to my bright career and future.

I am interning at Preservation Louisville, Inc., a nonprofit organization focusing on historical preservation and on protecting and promoting the community's cultural, environmental and architectural heritage. This is the leverage that we will need when applying for jobs.

I am currently enrolled in Land Use and Planning Law which is an essential course for the planning field. It is one of my favorite classes along with another course, Historical Preservation. Everything is perfect timing because I am learning and applying, and applying and learning as I go.
Freshman Melissa Garcia is a member of the Fisk Honda Campus All Star Challenge team. She is one of four members selected to compete in the national tournament. Her selection is based on her knowledge of current events and history and her strong commitment to the team. She is also a strong contributor on bonus questions when team members can confer. Melissa is a joint sociology and psychology major. “This is the first time there have been two freshmen on the team,” Melissa says. “The majority of schools participating in HCASC have teams comprised of juniors and seniors.”

Melissa was a member of her high school’s African American quiz bowl team. When tryouts were announced on campus, she says, “I knew I had to be at the campus competition.”

To prepare for competition, the Fisk team practices four times a week. The team placed third in the pre-national competition and was one of the Sweet 16 participants in the national tournament. Melissa says, “I pay so much more attention to anything that I learn in class, or see on the news, or read on the Internet because you never know what will be asked in the next question.”

Melissa is a member of the W.E.B. DuBois General Honors Program as well. She also volunteers daily at the Carl Van Vechten Art Gallery. “My secret to time management and multitasking is to see the value of every moment,” Melissa says.