

## Anthropology & Sociology Department Newsletter Spring 2018 – Spring 2019



## Editor's Welcome

Dear alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of Western Carolina University's Department of Anthropology and Sociology,

Welcome to the 2019 edition of our department newsletter. Over the past year our alumni, students, faculty, and staff have made noteworthy achievements and important contributions to their communities. We have welcomed new colleagues to the department, and we have celebrated the retirement of beloved faculty members. In the pages that follow you will find highlights of department activities, honors, and awards along with news about alumni, students, and faculty. In addition to following this newsletter, a great way to stay up to date with our department and the related disciplines of Anthropology and Sociology is to like and follow our Facebook page, WCU Anth and Soc, at:

<https://www.facebook.com/WCUAnthropologyandSociology/>

Finally, if you would like to make suggestions for future newsletters, please contact the editor, Dr. Ben Steere, at: [basteere@wcu.edu](mailto:basteere@wcu.edu).

## Department News

### Sociology alumni honored at the 2018 Alumni Awards



At WCU's 2018 Alumni Awards, Facebook researcher Mary Beth Fallin Hunzaker, a sociologist with expertise in the social psychology of information transmission, received the Young Alumni Award. Elizabeth Ransom, who also is a sociologist and known internationally as a top scholar of agriculture and the food system, was honored with the Academic Achievement Award. Congratulations to both alumni for their well-deserved awards.

Pictured from left to right: Dr. Peter Nieckarz, Dr. Tony Hickey, Dr. Elizabeth Ransom, Dr. Mary Beth Fallin Hunzaker, current sociology senior Maddy Watson, and Department Head, Dr. Kathleen Brennan.



## Dr. Tony Hickey announces retirement and will establish scholarship

This spring, Dr. Tony Hickey will retire after teaching for over 30 years at WCU. Dr. Hickey earned his B.S., M.S, and Ph.D. in Sociology from Cornell University, focusing on Development Sociology, Rural Sociology, and Research Methods. He joined the faculty of WCU in 1986, serving as Dean of Research and Graduate Studies from 1986 to 1997 and as a professor of Sociology from 1986 until now. Dr. Hickey published books and articles on statistical techniques for social research, migration, rural sociology, and development. From his position at WCU, Dr. Hickey regularly took students to Kenya for a summer field school in sociology. For many students, this was a life-changing experience, and a highlight of their academic careers.

One of Dr. Hickey's fellow sociologists, Dr. Peter Nieckarz, writes that Tony, "has been a central figure in the in the sociology program for a long time, bringing a great deal of enthusiasm to the classroom that that students found inspiring. He is also an amazing advisor and mentor to many of our students. Tony is a community sociologist, and he always viewed the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and WCU as his community. He strived to be a good community citizen."

Our department will celebrate Tony's career with a special event we're calling "Dr. Hickey's Last Lecture." Dr. Hickey will give a public lecture on Friday, May 3, in the Natural Sciences Building Lecture Hall (NS1) at 4 pm. Tony's last lecture will be followed immediately by a celebration at Innovation Station in Dillsboro. Please join us!



Upon his retirement, Tony plans to establish a scholarship, The Hickey Student Development Fund, to support undergraduate student research and fund student travel to conferences. Donations for this scholarship will be accepted at Tony's last lecture and the reception to follow.

Tony and his wife, Sharon, looking forward to new adventures.

## Campus and community celebrate Tom Belt's retirement



On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018, WCU faculty, staff, and students gathered with family and friends from the local community in the Bardo Fine Arts center to celebrate Tom Belt's retirement. Tom's contributions to the teaching, mentoring, and the revitalization of the Cherokee language are beyond measure.

During his years at WCU, Tom taught a four-semester sequence of Cherokee language classes and courses on Cherokee grammar, Cherokee language literature, and Cherokee philosophy. Mr. Belt, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, is a fluent Cherokee speaker and works closely with speakers from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to produce culturally-based Cherokee language learning material. Before joining the Cherokee Language Program, Mr. Belt worked as a counselor's aide in a local treatment center for native youths. He attended the Universities of Oklahoma and Colorado and taught Cherokee language at the Cherokee elementary school in Cherokee, North Carolina. Mr. Belt has also served as a consultant to various cultural archives and to indigenous language programs in public schools and on the post-secondary level. Tom will be greatly missed, we wish him all the best in retirement, and we look forward to bringing him back to campus as a guest speaker after he has had some time to relax.

## Archaeology laboratory upgraded

Over the summer of 2018, WCU completed major renovations to its archaeological archives, which contains collections associated with many significant Cherokee cultural sites. These collections include artifacts from the Trail of Tears, the Unicoi Turnpike, the Quanassee or Spikebuck Mound, and WCU's campus. The upgraded facilities (pictured to the right, with Anthropology major Brandi Delp), include a new, state-of-the-art compression shelving system. In an interview for the WCU Reporter, Dr. Brett Riggs, who was awarded a \$175,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service for the project, stated, "The grant provided for complete rehabilitation of the facility and rehousing of our collections, both for curatorial and research purposes. This upgrade was a major step for the university with its Cherokee collections."



The proposed name for the facility is “Tali Tsisgwayahi Archaeological Collections Curation Facility,” taken from the Cherokee phrase meaning “Two Sparrows Town” and written as ᏧᏰᏍᏍᏗᏰᏰᏰ. Tali Tsisgwayahi was a historic name for the site that the WCU campus occupies today.

## Cherokee Studies wins academic program of excellence award and establishes scholarship fund



Cherokee studies faculty at WCU Day in Cherokee

In April 2018, the Cherokee Studies program was honored with the 2018 WCU Academic Program of Excellence Award. Because the WCU campus theme for 2017-18 was focused on Cherokee culture, the program found itself in the spotlight and experienced noteworthy accomplishments in the arenas of research, teaching and service, while also helping to strengthen WCU’s relationship with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. At the award ceremony, acting Chancellor Allison Morrison-Shetlar remarked:

“Their extraordinary year did not culminate in a single noteworthy accomplishment, but rather a stunning list of engaged scholarship accomplishments, contributing to WCU’s ‘2020’ Vision by helping to build and maintain partnerships between WCU and the Cherokee community and by sharing important information about Cherokee culture with the campus and region.”

The faculty and staff of the program have used the \$10,000 prize that comes along with the award to establish a Cherokee Studies Endowed Scholarship to support undergraduate and graduate minors in the Cherokee Studies Program. Recipients must have and maintain a Grade Point Average of 2.5 or better and must be minoring in Cherokee Studies at the Undergraduate or Graduate level. Special consideration will be given to students that are members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Cherokee Nation, The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, or other Native American groups. The award is renewable for up to four years if all criteria are met. To contribute to the Cherokee Studies Endowed Scholarship, please click this link: [cherokeescholarship.wcu.edu](http://cherokeescholarship.wcu.edu).



## Department Welcomes New Faculty

### Christine Bailey



Christine Bailey, who received her Master's degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in August 2018, joined the WCU team as a forensic anthropology instructor and the forensic anthropology facilities curator. She is a biological anthropologist whose research interests include human skeletal biology, forensic anthropology, taphonomy, human rights, and best practices in forensic anthropology. Her MA research titled "Age-at-death Estimation: Accuracy and Reliability of Age-Reporting Strategies," focused on evaluating age-at-death estimation methods commonly used in forensic investigations. When not at the forensic facilities, in the classroom, or in the office, you can find Christine playing board/card games, reading for fun, or grabbing a drink with some friends at Innovation Brewing.

### Mary Beth Schmid

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Schmid is a cultural anthropologist and teaches introductory anthropology classes part-time at WCU. She studies the intersections of food systems, migration, kinship, and globalization in the western hemisphere. For her doctoral project, she worked with binational Mexican-American farming families who farm in both the foothills of southern Appalachia and the foothills of the Bajío in west-central Mexico. The research was funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the National Science Foundation. She is currently researching community-based food security projects in western North Carolina. Her next project will examine evolving trade relations and global governance of fresh fruit and vegetable supply chains in and across the Americas.



## Congratulations to our Spring 2018 Department Award Winners!

The 2018 winners for our college and department awards were honored at a special reception in the Blue Ridge Conference Center on campus in April 2018. Congratulations to these outstanding students. This year's award winners are listed below.

ANSO Department Outstanding Senior Award – Anthropology: Luke Vaden  
College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Scholar – Anthropology: Zach Leposa  
College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Scholar – Forensic Anthropology: Alexandra Cruz  
College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Scholar – Cherokee Studies: Lissa Raven Smith  
ANSO Department Outstanding Senior Award – Sociology: Heidi Liles  
College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Scholar – Sociology: Maggie Gore



Front: Alexandra Cruz (Forensic Anthropology) with Dr. Katie Zejdlik. Standing in the back is Zachary Leposa (Anthropology) with Dr. Ben Steere, Lissa Raven Smith (Cherokee Studies) with Dr. Sara Snyder, and Heidi Liles (Sociology) with Dr. Tony Hickey.

## Student and Alumni News

WCU Anthropology and Sociology students and majors are taking the skills they learned in the classroom into the workforce and on to higher education. Read on for updates from our students and alumni.

- Cody McCall (senior, Sociology) was accepted into Trinity College in Dublin, where he will study race and nationalism. Cody writes with this update:

While I am not sure what my exact dissertation will be, I intend on studying issues of race, ethnicity, and national identity in graduate school. Currently I have been accepted to Trinity College Dublin's MPhil in Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict, UCD Dublin's MA in Race, Migration, and Decolonial Studies, and University of Edinburgh's MSc in Nationalism Studies, and I am waiting to hear back from one more program. After taking Dr. Mwaniki's minority groups class, I felt compelled to further my education in the areas mentioned above after gaining a greater understanding of their impact in today's world. I am thrilled to have been offered placement in each of these amazing programs. I am grateful for each of the professors that I have had in the sociology department, without them I am not sure where I would be.

- Manny Zenquis (Sociology) will be graduating from Harvard Divinity School this May, and recently published a co-authored article with Dr. Munene Mwaniki in *The Journal of Sport and Social Issues*.
- Miranda Black (Anthropology) has accepted a position as the assistant facility manager at the Shelton House Museum in Waynesville, NC while simultaneously completing at Master's in Public History at WCU. She says that the skills she learned during her internship in the WCU archaeology lab with Dr. Jane Eastman have been invaluable.
- Anthropology alumnus Enzo Petrozza (pictured on the right, with cows) is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Maritime Archaeology at the University of Malta. Between classes he's finding time for a little sight-seeing.





## Please Keep in Touch!

Don't hesitate to contact us with your questions, comments, and suggestions. We want to include more alumni news and updates in future newsletters, and we need your help. Please click this link to update your contact information and provide comments, suggestions, or information that we should include in future newsletters: [WCU ANSO alumni survey](#). We want to tell you stories!

You can also contact our newsletter editor, Dr. Ben Steere, at [basteere@wcu.edu](mailto:basteere@wcu.edu), if you would prefer to relay updates and stories via email.

## Your WCU Anthropology and Sociology Legacy

In 2017, the Department of Anthropology and Sociology kicked off a fundraising campaign aimed at offering need-based scholarships to our students. Cornerstone Scholarships, named by Richard Starnes, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, are endowed, which means that funds are awarded to students from the interest generated by a large sum of money. Our initial goal was to raise a minimum of \$10,000. By the spring of 2018, thanks to donations from 100% of the Anthropology and Sociology faculty and generous external donations, we reached that goal. Your additional donations will help us expand scholarship opportunities for our students.

Consider donating directly to the Cornerstone Scholarship Fund for the Department of Anthropology and Sociology. You can make a gift online at the WCU Make a Gift website. Click [this link](#) to navigate to the site. On the Make a Gift page, choose "Your Gift, Your Choice," and select "Anthropology and Sociology."

For more information, or to make a donation, contact:

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