



Sociograph

FEBRUARY 2020

Recapping our 2019 Annual Conference

The annual conference of the Sociologists of Minnesota took place in October 2019 on the campus of Minnesota State University, Mankato. We had folks come to Mankato from as far away as Bemidji, Duluth, and Ely! There was something for everyone at this year's conference, both faculty and students alike. And that is a great thing because we had over 50 students register and participate in the conference!

SAVE THE DATE

SOM 2020 Conference

**SOCIOLOGY AT THE
EDGE OF DEMOCRACY**

October 22-23, 2020

Macalester College,
St. Paul, MN

Paper Sessions. As President-Elect, Sarah Epplen coordinated an expansive program featuring an impressive number of sessions of wide variety. Participation by faculty and students was strong and included topics as broad as vibrators and sexual pleasure, evolving definitions of medical sociology, jurors' constructions of capital defendants, and the risk of divorce in same-sex marriages, respectively. Students and faculty members from across the state shared the stage to present their research.

Panels and Workshops. Participants also had the option to engage in critical discussions in panel sessions. One panel discussed how college faculty navigate decisions about class texts when authors have become embroiled in controversy (i.e., what to do with our Michael Kimmel books now?), and another discussed how sociology adds value to non-profits with a panel of leaders from various

non-profit organizations in Southern Minnesota. Participants also had the chance to attend two workshops where they learned valuable skills to take back into their work. One workshop on creating project-based and community-engaged classes taught participants how to get students in the community, not just for their own benefit, but to benefit the community. A second workshop, co-led by graduate students from the University of Minnesota who serve as managing editors for *The Society Pages* and a faculty member at Vermillion Community College, helped participants see how to better communicate sociology to the general public.

Highlighting Student Work. As many of you know, Sociologists of Minnesota prides itself on being a professional organization that is student welcoming. We aim to provide a space where students can present their work—even work that is in progress—in a professional setting so they will get a taste of an academic conference and feedback from colleagues in a supportive environment. Students presented their work spanning a broad range of topics such as genocide, Arab Spring, sex education, Dungeons and Dragons, competition among children, gymnastics, table service, and more. These students thrived at the conference, holding their own in sessions where they presented alongside seasoned faculty members. The organizers were proud to see them rise to the occasion. Supporting students is something of which SOM is very proud. An exciting way we honor the hard work of students, of course, is the Caroline Rose Student Paper Competition. Please see the 2020 call for submissions for this award on the next page.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

CAROLINE ROSE STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION WINNERS

Amy August, University of Minnesota (Graduate Paper)
"Parallel but Uneven Programs: The Hidden Curricula of Recreational and Developmental Girls' Gymnastics"

Sam Brickley, The College of St. Scholastica (Undergraduate Paper)
"Sources of College Information: The Key Influence of Parents and Friends"

See below for the 2020 Call for Submissions

Keynote Address. The keynote address was co-sponsored by MSU Mankato's Social Justice Lecture Series and featured Professor Yurie Hong, from Gustavus Adolphus College and Indivisible St.



Keynote Speaker Yurie Hong (center) with SOM President Sarah Epplen (left) and event co-host and Social Justice Lecture Series Coordinator Carol Glasser (right).

Peter/Greater Mankato. Her talk, "Words into Deeds: Making the Leap from Academics to Action", inspired the large crowd to consider how they can use the skills they already possess to participate in real democratic action. Students and faculty alike found her talk inspiring and full of hope for using their voices for change.

SOM alum Steve Buechler, emeriti faculty of MSU Mankato delivered a plenary session that detailed—with his usual humor and sociological perspective—his experience surviving cancer. Pick up a copy of his book, *How Steve Became Ralph: A Cancer/Stem Cell Odyssey (With Jokes)*.

VOTING MATTERS

During the conference lunch, we had technical difficulties and were unable to show the film *Voting Matters* as planned. This film follows a civil rights lawyer who works tirelessly to combat voter suppression in Ohio. You can watch the film here, if your campus library support Kanopy.

<https://www.kanopy.com/product/voting-matters>

In a time of increasing political polarization and voter suppression, the film is an important reminder that voting matters, and that, as my colleague Barbara Keating always says, "elections have consequences." The 2020 conference at Macalester College will be held just a few weeks before the 2020 President Election with the theme "Sociology at the Edge of Democracy." We look

forward to creating more opportunities to engage in conversations about politics, sociology, and more in St. Paul this October.

2020 Caroline Rose Student Paper Competition Awards

Undergraduate and graduate students across Minnesota are encouraged to submit their papers to win one of the Awards.

First- and second-place winners will be announced in the undergraduate and graduate divisions. All papers written during the 2019-2020 year by an undergraduate or graduate student at a college or university in the state of Minnesota are eligible to be considered. Students are welcome to submit empirical or theoretical papers as well as research proposals. Papers co-authored by more than one student will be considered, but co-authors cannot include faculty members. All papers, including those not selected for an Award, will receive comments from the Student Paper Competition Committee on the paper's strengths and places for improvement. First- and second-place winners in both the undergraduate and graduate divisions will receive a cash prize. In addition, winners will receive free conference registration, a meal at the conference, and membership in SOM for the year. Winners can also inquire with the SOM Treasurer, Sadie Pendaz-Foster (sadie-pendaz-foster@normandale.edu), about financial assistance for travel and lodging for the SOM Conference. All winners are expected to present their paper at the 2020 SOM Conference in Saint Paul. To be considered, all papers must be submitted by no later than September 1, 2020. To submit, students must email their papers to Aaron Hoy (Student Paper Competition Committee Member) at aaron.hoy@mnsu.edu. All papers will then be evaluated by at least two members of the Committee using a rubric available at the SOM website (www.socmn.org). All winners will be notified in advance of the 2020 SOM Conference.

Please visit our website for more information
<http://www.socmn.org/>

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