

Here it is, my last Alumni Update (for the year – more on that below):

You've heard a lot from me lately about faculty hires. As exciting as that is, it shouldn't be at the expense of other news, so this note, in addition to being the last for 2013 -2014, also represents a return to normalcy.

Well, mainly, as there is one further announcement that I am compelled to share with you: this past Wednesday, the Academic Council approved Steve Morgan's appointment as Professor of Sociology and Education, effective July 1 (Steve also will be a Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, joining Kathy Edin as the department's second). Some of you may have heard that we are losing our sociologist Dean Kathie Newman to the UMass system, where she will be Provost. Most of the hires that have commanded so much of my attention in recent Alumni Updates were anticipated in the department's White Paper strategic plan, an exercise that Kathie initiated shortly after her arrival 4 years ago. Kathie has been strongly supportive of the department's aspirations and none of this would have been accomplished without her commitment to helping us remain strong. We thank her for that, and wish her great success on the even larger stage of a state system.

So, this whirlwind two-year stretch of searches and negotiations really is done! And I hardly need add that the conclusion is a happy one. I hope that many of you will be able to attend our ASA reception to welcome our long list of new faculty in person. These get-togethers always are a big hit, and this year's will be especially special – do try to be there!

With all these exciting "comings," I would be remiss if I did not mention an unwelcome "going." Steve Plank, a dear and valued colleague, has left Hopkins for what he says is his "dream job" in DC: Director of Research & Evaluation for the Corporation for National & Community Service ([nationalservice.gov](http://nationalservice.gov)), the federal agency that runs AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund. Steve's team includes an Associate Director and a staff of six other professionals. Here is how he describes his new job:

"The work will probably prove to be these five things (and more) in approximately equal measure: (1) dreaming up, and executing, research and evaluation projects that serve the mission of CNCS, (2) managing or overseeing research firms that have contracts to do national evaluations that are too big for our in-house staff to do, (3) practicing politics with a lower case "p," by which I mean building consensus around one idea or another, getting the R&E voice heard among the various voices that want to be heard, (4) engaging in some really interesting inter-agency initiatives (Education, Labor, HHS, FEMA, White House, and more) around best practices in "innovation and evidence," and (5) just being some sort of thought-partner and navigator-of-bureaucracy (two different things, but neither happens well without the other) with the rest of the CNCS leadership.

I believe Steve's good work in helping launch the Baltimore Education Research Consortium revealed that deep down he wanted to be closer to the center of action than is practical from an academic-university base. He will be missed, and of course we wish him every success. Please let me know if you would like to congratulate Steve personally - - I have his new contact information and his permission to share it, but I do not want to make it public by including it in this note.

Last week was our commencement. We wished well to 16 graduating seniors, an historic high for the department. Also at an all-time high is the number of departmental majors – we hit 50 this year, which for me personally had long been aspirational and, I thought, beyond reach. But our little boutique major has taken off, mainly on the strength of our new Global Social Change and Development track for International Studies majors. It amounts to a double major, and has proven to be extremely popular. That's a good thing, so long as we can manage the growth. That may prove challenging down the road, what with all the exciting undergraduate programming initiatives that are under way. They include the new Social Policy minor for undergraduates that launched this year, expected growth in East Asian and Islamic Studies, with Sociology faculty key to both, and our expanded course offerings to help pre-meds prepare for the social science module that will be introduced to the MEDCATS next year. And too, there has been some talk about adding a "social factors in health" concentration that has the potential to be a very large draw.

We take pride in the department's major and elective offerings and work hard to make the department a welcoming place for highly motivated students. These various initiatives are raising that to an entirely new level, and if they are appropriately resourced by the Dean, we should be able to "do it all": be a stronger player at the undergraduate level without compromising the department's commitment to its graduate program.

This year we also had an unusually large number of PhD graduates to wish well as they moved on to the next step – 5 total. And increasingly, that "next step" entails a transitional postdoc. I knew that post-docs were becoming more popular, but I hadn't appreciate the import of this trend until we had some experience with it first-hand in the job search that landed us Julia Burdick-Will. Julia is joining us from a post-doc at Brown. She was one of 5 short-listed candidates who came to campus to interview for the position. Of the 5, only 1 was a traditional ABD. Two of the others were in post-docs and the fifth was an assistant professor at another institution. The ABD was quite strong by the standards of ABDs, but the others had a decided edge – stronger *vitae* and more professional polish, such that the ABD was badly overmatched. For me it was something of a revelation, and I've been won over: a good post-doc of a year or two can be a strong platform for whatever comes next. The key is that it be a good one, and not just a wasted year or two.

But I digress. Here are little snippets on our 5 new PhDs who have joined your ranks:

**Rachel Corel** completed her degree in the summer of 2013. She took a one year post-doc at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and has just moved into a tenure track faculty position at Stetson University in DeLand Florida.

**Sahan Karatasli** completed his degree in the fall of 2013 and has stayed on here as a post-doc supporting the Global Social Change and Development IS track that I mentioned above. He also is co-coordinator of the Global Social Protest Research Working Group of the Arrighi Center.

**Robert Nathenson** completed his degree this spring and has moved up to Philadelphia for a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Dan Pasciuti** completed his degree in the fall of 2013 and, like Sahan, he has a local post-doc in support of the GSC&D track, as well as the Arrighi Center's Development Research Group and its Urban Governance Research Working Group. Dan also has a grant from the Abel Foundation to study community resources in the Charles Village neighborhood.

**Christian Villenas** completed the program this spring. He works as a Policy Analyst at Advocates for Children of New York, a non-profit that works on behalf of children who are at greatest risk for school-based discrimination and/or academic failure due to poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. Christian wasn't able to make it to commencement, as he could only manage one trip to B'more and he decided to use it to attend my surprise retirement party the week before. Christian's and my son Brian's presence in the room were two huge surprises on top of the big surprise of the event itself. I was quite touched – a teary-eyed moment for me in fact.

Let's send up a hearty Hoppie cheer of congratulations to these our newest recipients of the Alumni Update!

And mentioning Alums, I've a few items of interest to share with you.

Robert Manning (1989) is about to embark on a grand adventure, having accepted a position on the faculty of *Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University* in Damman, Saudi Arabia. During the fall semester Robert will be Professor and Chair of the Department of Finance and Accounting in the School of Business. In the Spring, he will be elevated to Dean of Faculty Research. But before all that, he tells me he will be at ASA, so we will have the opportunity to wish him well personally!

Bob gets frequent mention in these mailings. Henry Perry (1977) does also, although Robert and Henry couldn't be more different career-wise. The key is that they write to me!

Henry invites everyone – and he means this literally -- to sign up for his online course “Health for All through Primary Health Care.” This is the fifth offering of the course and it gets an enrollment in the 1000s from all throughout the world. It is free for those who are content to dabble, and a mere \$49 if you do all the work and wish to receive a Certificate of Completion. Here is a link: <https://www.coursera.org/course/healthforall>.

And this also from Henry, which is presented in its original, as I was told to absolutely not edit anything out (!): “I had the good fortune to be in the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of students in the MD/PhD Program in the Behavioral Sciences that began in the fall of 1971. I spent two years in the Department of Social Relations. Then I finished medical school and completed an internship, and I returned to write my doctoral thesis under the wise guidance of my friend ever since, Karl Alexander. After finishing my degree, I trained in general surgery and then began my career in global health that now spans three decades. I haven’t really been a sociologist, but my training in sociology has informed my entire career, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity I had as a graduate student in the department. My work gradually shifted toward NGO programs in community health, primary health care, and maternal and child health, with long-term stints in Bolivia, Bangladesh and Haiti as well as short-term stints in many other countries. I now teach in the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and am involved in ongoing research and writing projects as well”

Henry adds that his January offering of “Health for All through Primary Health Care” had an enrollment of 11,000!

Now isn’t it nice to learn all that about Henry and the path his career has taken? Let it be an object lesson to others.

In fact, one comes immediately to mind – Susan Dauber (1993). Susan wasn’t writing for public consumption, so I’m taking a bit of liberty here. But I’m an old man and about to retire, so what can she do to me if I offend? Susan had left her position as a major program officer with the Spencer Foundation and had been wrestling with what to do next. It seems she has hit on a winner!

I am totally loving my post-Spencer work life. I fell into the world's best "real job" (after deciding that my small business life was too isolating and boring). Also I really love being back at a university, where there's always something going on. (Also part of my job is to get to know what everybody is doing, so going to seminars and colloquia are as much of my job as I want to make it). See all the alsos? Lots of really nice aspects of this work. Anyway -- I work at Northwestern now, in the Department of foundation relations -- which means I am basically consulting with faculty on their research proposals to private (so not federal) foundations. Which for me is ideal because I know what I'm talking about (both in thinking ABOUT the research behind the proposal, and in thinking about how program officers do their jobs and what will likely work), it's all very short term -- I can hang out with a set of ideas for a while and then it's gone. I don't WRITE proposals, I just critique them, talk through design issues that strike me as important, etc. and then I'm on my way. And maybe best of all -- I see a lot of education research (because I'm in charge of the school of ed, as well as all the social sciences and communication), but I work in all these other areas too so it's constantly cool stuff that I deal with. . I've been here for 7 months now. Another really nice thing is that I've lived in this area for 21 years, so my house is 2 miles away -- no more 2.5 hour commute every day!”

Good for Susan – would that we all could be so fortunate in finding Nirvana in the here and now!

Travis Gosa (2008), I have discovered, has become quite the public intellectual from his base at Cornell. I absolutely loved Travis’s dissertation -- a content analysis of oppositional culture imagery in Hip Hop lyrics – and it pleases me that he has used it as a vehicle for engaging audiences beyond the academy on this and related topics . Here is a sampling, with hot links:

“From B-Boys To Billions, A Brief History Of Hip-Hop As Business.” NPR, All Things Considered with Audie Cornish. May 13, 2014  
(<http://www.npr.org/2014/05/13/312197626/from-b-boys-to-billions-a-brief-history-of-hip-hop-as-business>).

“Loud Music' A Case Of 'Testosterone, Guns, And Florida.” NPR. Tell Me More with Michel Martin. Full interview segment. February 19, 2014 (<http://www.npr.org/2014/02/19/279627212/loud-music-a-case-of-testosterone-guns-and-florida>).

“Black billionaires and “zero-naires: The Loss of America’s Black Middle Class” Lee Rayburn, WHCU 95.9FM, Ithaca, NY. May 14, 2014 (<http://whcuradio.com/morning-newswatch/black-billionaires-and-zero-naires/>).

“Why are White Men Like Michael Dunn So Angry?” Op-Ed. The Root. February 17, 2014 ([http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/02/did\\_white\\_male\\_insecurity\\_kill\\_jordan\\_davis.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/02/did_white_male_insecurity_kill_jordan_davis.html)). Syndicated in several local, national, and international newspapers).

“Fear Of Black Pre-Schoolers: Halting The Preschool-To-Prison Pipeline.” Op-Ed. Blackstar News. March 28, 2014 (<http://www.blackstarnews.com/us-politics/justice/fear-of-black-pre-schoolers-halting-the-preschool-to-prison-pipeline.html>)

And

“Colleges Love Hip Hop, But Do They Love Black Men Too?” Op-ed. The Chronicle of Higher Education. February 15, 2013 (<http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2013/02/15/colleges-love-hip-hop-but-do-they-love-black-men-too/>).

Adia Harvey Wingfield (2004) will soon be able to fill a bookshelf all on her own! If you know Adia, and have been keeping up with my mailings, this hardly surprises. Her latest, "No More Invisible Man: Race and Gender in Men's Work" has won the Richard A. Lester Award for the Outstanding Book in Labor Economics and Industrial Relations published in 2013, given by the Industrial Relations Section at Princeton University.

Paul Power (1979), another regular correspondent, writes from “down under”: “your imminent retirement happens to coincide with my 74<sup>th</sup> birthday! Some times I feel that old, while other times I don’t feel much different from when I was at JHU in 1977-1979 (though typing that now makes me realise how long ago it actually was!). One good thing that has come from your newsletters is that I have re-established contact with Karen Campbell, who was a member of the same cohort and is now in an administrative role in Nashville TN. It has been good to catch up with her, as Kim and I attended her wedding in Virginia way back then. She has also been supportive of our charity, The Sunflower Foundation.”

As I’ve said before, I do admire Paul’s (and Kim’s) commitment to doing good through their Foundation, and it pleases me no end that these little mailings can help friends reconnect. Do feel free to use me that way – if you’re getting my notes, that means I have your email address and can share it with others.

And mentioning “sharing,” I am happy to share the news that YingYi Ma (2007) has been promoted to Associate Professor, with tenure, at Syracuse University. And this while balancing career and raising a young family. It is scary to think that the youngest member of her family, Jayden, is 3 already! Congratulations YingYi.

Mindelyn Buford (2010) has been productive also. Kathy and I are looking forward to attending the naming ceremony for her two little ones, Liv and Viv, later this summer. Her note extending the invitation arrived at 2:30 a.m., which could have something to do with Liv and Viv, or her faculty duties at Northeastern University in Boston, or, what’s likely, both.

Bringing my Kathy into the picture reminds me that in my last note I mentioned we would be heading off to New York for Aaron Pallas’s (1985) installation as the Arthur I. Gates Professor of Sociology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. We did attend, and, personally, I was proud as proud can be! And I have to say, TC certainly knows how to recognize its most distinguished faculty. The event was held in a large

auditorium that reeked of tradition with all sorts of heavy hitters in attendance. Aaron entertained us with an interesting account of some of his research into educational disparities in the Big Apple's school system and he hit a perfect tone – informative without being ponderous. Good for Aaron. I really do miss him, including the many free lunches I scored on our UNC - Virginia b'ball wagers. Go Heels! And I still haven't a clue what on earth a "Wahoo" is????

Now I transition closer to home.

Darlene Miller (2004) is a Senior Researcher at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape. Did he say "closer to home"? Well, yes, because a poster caught my eye about a month ago when wandering the hall that Darlene was to give a talk in the department later that week. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the talk, and somehow I didn't manage to connect with Darlene at all despite her being in residence for over a month with us. Inexcusable, you might say (and I might think). But there were extenuating circumstances. Darlene had slipped in under the radar (my radar, at least) as a guest of the Arrighi Center, whose offices are in another building, and she was hiding away working on a book. I don't have the excuse of working on a book (that's thankfully done!), but I have been quite busy, and very much in-and-out. So we managed to miss one another. But Darlene kindly followed up with a very nice note, trying to absolve me ("I am afraid I was somewhat mole-like in my mission to complete my book manuscript"), and adding:

"Thank you for all the alumni efforts on your behalf. We don't always respond but we are aware of these and they help to make us feel a part of this noble institution. It has been a wonderful visit and a welcome respite from South African university life."

I do like hearing that, as you know, and it seems a good segue to an announcement. I will be staying on for at least a year as Research Professor, mainly to help with the startup of our new IES Predoctoral Training Program if our resubmitted application is successful (Steve Morgan and I will serve as Co-Directors, with Steve leading and me following from quite far back). With that legitimacy, I have asked Andy Cherlin, who will be chair next year (followed by Beverly Silver for a full three year term), if I could continue the Alumni Updates. He is allowing me that privilege. That pleases me, and I hope it will please you also.

To conclude, I have two brief local braggings:

Our first Bloomberg, Kathy Edin has been inducted into the National Academy of Sciences as a member and into the American Academy of Political and Social Science as a Fellow. That's quite something, eh?

And our graduate student Burak Gural received a commendation from the Dean's office for his course Rural Development in Asia. I quote, "for scoring a perfect "5" on the course evaluation question that asked the student for an overall evaluation of the class. This is quite an achievement, made all the more impressive given that over 95% of the students submit course evaluations. What this means is that it is likely that everyone in your class gave the course the highest possible ranking." That's quite something too, and it no doubt helped Burak snag the assistant professorship at Koc University that he will be starting in the spring of 2015.

I could say more, but I don't have the same endurance as I used too. Nor do I want to test your patience too severely. And too, this isn't my last opportunity!

So, that's it for now. Have a great summer everyone, and please do try to make it to our August 18 reception in San Fran!

Best,

Karl