



# Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminology Eastern Illinois University

*Fall 2024 Newsletter*

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## Welcome from the Chair

Friends and Alumni:

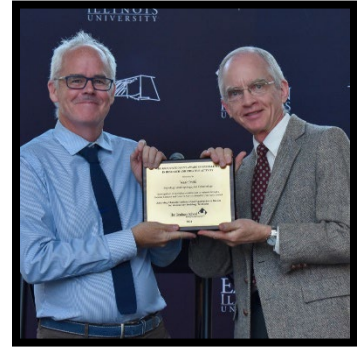
We are in peak fall right now, and I suppose peak college. I half-joked to someone in the admissions office last month that this is the time of the year that seems to be featured prominently on every University in the country's marketing material—as if students only attend college when the leaves are swirling underfoot. To be fair, it is a pretty special time of the year. 'Tis the season for EIU hoodies and football tailgates and crisp late-night walks home from the library.

## Department News

Last week, EIU's Board of Trustees approved the interdisciplinary Bachelor of Social Work program. It is now on its way to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The program represents a collaboration between our department and the Department of Human Services. Last year, Human Services hired a program director and field director, and we are currently running a search for a social worker. We are also looking to hire a Criminologist who could offer courses that would appeal to students broadly interested in social work, sociology, and of course, criminology. With law enforcement commonly engaging with people with addictions, mental illness, and homelessness, these fields increasingly overlap.

## Faculty News

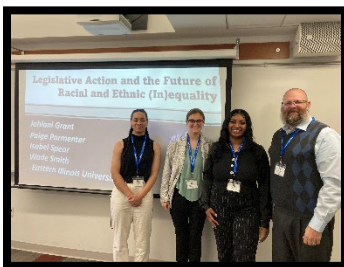
Last month, EIU held its annual celebration of scholarship and creativity, and several of our faculty were recognized for their research. Professor Mari Kita's recent book on the Japanese justice system—*Offender Care and Support by Families in Contemporary Japan*—was prominently on display, along with articles and book chapters by Professors Caitlin Lynch, Michael Gillespie, Don Holly, Bill Lovekamp, and Emeritus Professor Gary Foster. Additionally, Professor Wade Smith was honored with the Dean's Award of Excellence in Research and Creative Activity for a grant-funded project looking into how Sociology textbooks address the topic of racism.



**Dr. Don Holly (left) accepts the Dean's Award of Excellence in Research and Creative Activity on behalf of Dr. Wade Smith from Dr. Bob Chesnut.**

## Student News

The annual meeting of the Illinois Sociological Association just concluded, and seven of our students attended and presented. Among our presenters, department student ambassador and junior Criminology and Criminal Justice major Paige Parmenter discussed the Wayne Ford Racial Impact Statement Act, and Rebecca Moore, a returning adult student and senior Sociology major, addressed the role of social media in drawing attention to micro-plastic pollution. Additionally, two of our students—T.J. Seputis



**Students (left to right) Isabel Spear, Paige Parmenter, Jahlani Grant, and Dr. Wade Smith at the ISA Annual Conference.**



**Rebecca Moore presenting at the ISA Annual Conference.**

(sophomore Criminology) and Chase Pier (senior Sociology)—received best student paper awards. I would not be surprised if some of these presentations are subsequently revisited for delivery at national conferences, or turn into honors theses or publications, or inspire post-graduate studies and career trajectories.

## Alumni News



**Dr. Gary Foster and PJ Thompson at the Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminology 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception in 2017.**

Phillip “PJ” Thompson was recognized with the Louis V. Hencken Alumni Service Award at EIU’s Alumni Dinner this past homecoming weekend. PJ graduated from EIU in 2003 with a degree in Sociology and then went on to earn a Master’s in Higher Education Leadership at McKendree University and a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Leadership from Maryville University. He has held a variety of positions in Higher Education and is currently executive director of the Indiana State University Alumni Association. Congratulations, PJ!



**PJ Thompson receives the Louis V. Hencken Alumni Service Award.**

## Give Back and Pay it Forward

Speaking of Alumni, I’d like to spotlight for your attention and generosity this holiday season our department’s Alumni scholarship. Established in 2003, the scholarship is awarded each spring to a student majoring in Sociology or Criminology who has completed at least 18 hours of coursework in the major, has at least a 3.0 GPA, is working to support their education, and is involved in community or university service. Alumni scholarship recipients are bright, service-oriented, and hard-working students with financial need. The award amount of this scholarship varies from year to year based on interest accrued, but we are closing in on a neat \$1000 award, and I think we could get there this year with your help. Please donate today to make this happen, and then join us at our annual Honors Reception on April 11th, 2025, to celebrate our recipient. To donate, go to the [EIU Giving page](#), select “Other Gifts” from the drop-down menu, and indicate “Sociology, Anthropology, Criminology Alumni Scholarship” in the special instructions. Thank you!



**Dr. Caitlin Lynch presents Mersadeez Barrett with the Alumni Scholarship at the 2024 Annual Honors Reception.**

Don Holly

Chair, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology