President’s Soapbox

Attending my first academic conference in the mid-1980s as a graduate student from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Sociology, I marveled at the huge number of panels, variety of topics and the attendance of many scholars who vigorously debated critical issues. I paid little attention to the mechanics of organizing and running such large scholarly meetings. Coordinating the WSSA's 2014 Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico as President-Elect and General Program Chair educated me as to how these events are put together.

Social science grad school definitely did not teach me the logistical and other skills needed for pulling off a successful academic meeting. I knew our Conference Program was complicated (34 Sections and Affiliated Groups, each with its own panels and including ones that were cross-listed, sometimes among three groups), but I was not prepared for the difficulties of fitting everything into time slots and room locations within the few days available for our gathering. In addition to the academic

{cont. on pg. 9}
WSSA Sections Receive Special Recognition for Albuquerque Program

James G. Linn
Coordinator of Recruitment and Retention

While all of the WSSA sections that developed programs for the recent annual meeting in Albuquerque did a splendid job, several deserve special recognition for having more presentations than in 2013.

The following section coordinators deserve kudos for expanding their section participation: Heather Albalanesi, Anthropology, Social Psychology, and Sociology; Mark Melichar, Arid lands; Martin van der Velde, Association for Borderlands Studies; Ross Burkhart and Rita Ross, Canadian Studies; Debra Andris, Chicano, Latino and Hispanic Studies; Melinda Schlager and Kevin Thompson, Criminal Justice; John P. Watkins, Economics - AFIT; Scott Carson, Economics - General; Ignacio Medina-Nunez and Jesus Ruiz-Flores, Latin American Studies; Mary Jackson-Pitts, Mass Communications; Kevin Mitchell, Communications Studies; William Schaniel and Suzanne Kelly, New Zealand and Australian Studies; Viola Fuentes, Elizabeth D. Fredericksen, and Patsy Kraeger, Public Administration; Boris Morozov and Tima Moldogaziev, Public Finance and Budgeting; Jessica Clark and Anthony Amato, Rural Studies and Agriculture; Melissa Bokovoy, Slavic Studies; Diane Calloway-Graham and Barbara Bonnekessen, Women’s Studies; Michele Companion, Globalization and Development; Diane Calloway-Graham, Bill Pedersen and Moises Diaz, Social Work.

Also, Zach Smith, Coordinator of our newest section, Human Ecology; Chelsea Schelly, recently named Coordinator of Environmental Policy and Natural Resources Management; and Theodore Ransaw, Coordinator of our very successful Poster Sessions receive special praise. To obtain assistance in attracting and retaining section members/presenters, please contact Coordinator of Recruitment and Retention at jlinn87844@aol.com.
Downtown Portland offers an array of multicultural experiences for all types of travelers, from the most daring to the merely curious. One of the best places to start is by sampling foods from around the globe, all in the space of one block! Portland is home to over 500 street food carts, so step up and don’t be shy. These miniature restaurants offer amazing fare at very reasonable prices. You can get everything from reindeer sausage to kosher foods to vegan cuisine.

The rapid expansion of food truck culture has propelled Portland to the top of the premier food tourist destination lists. *Budget Travel Magazine* has hailed Portland as having the best street food in the world. All of this attention is music to the ears of city managers. Street food culture has been actively cultivated in the city, because the carts create economic opportunities and generate increased foot traffic in neighborhoods.

Many food carts are grouped into areas known as “pods.” Pods are collections of food trucks situated on hard surfaced areas, usually former commuter parking lots. Larger pods can host over 50 food trucks in one block. Solo food trucks can be found scattered throughout the city. The largest pod is located between Southwest Alder and Washington streets, from Southwest Ninth to Southwest Tenth avenues (not too far from Powell’s City of Books!). A few carts have limited sidewalk seating.

While there are tours available from a variety of venues (see http://www.travelportland.com/ or http://www.portland.com/ for suggestions), I prefer to explore on my own. I have had really interesting conversations with vendors about their backgrounds, the foods they present, and why they elected to have carts. It is a great way to meet some new and interesting people. Once you have stuffed yourself, there are plenty of opportunities to explore venues that showcase Multicultural Portland. Portland is proud of its diverse community. With vibrant Chinese American, Japanese American, African American, Hispanic American, Arab American, Indian American, Jewish American, and Native American communities, there are historical sites, events, museums, gardens, and local businesses that can provide wonderful learning and shopping experiences. A great place to start exploring is at the following web site: http://www.travelportland.com/plan-your-trip/multicultural/.

You can search this site by ethnic group or by calendar. For example, if you are interested in learning about the area’s Native American tribes and nations, the Portland Art Museum has a large display of baskets, paintings, and carvings from Northwest tribes. The museum’s Native American Art Council hosts lectures and public displays by local and regional artists throughout the year. There may be powwows or other events while you are in town. For a complete calendar, see http://
each improve the draft or will one person take responsibility for the writing? All sorts of configurations are workable, but it’s key to know what you’re getting into and to set deadlines accordingly.

Do you and your potential coauthor have complementary skills? Some of the best collaborations result from working with people whose skills fill the gaps in your own. Are you a stickler for details and the one who checks to see that every “i” is dotted and every “t” is crossed or do you have a big picture vision of where the project contributes to the existing literature? Do you write beautifully or have incredible programming skills? It may be that finding a coauthor whose strengths coincide with your weaknesses, and vice versa, will make you both stronger scholars.

Do you and your potential coauthor have complementary schedules for research and writing? I have taught at institutions on a semester calendar, the quarter system, and most recently the block plan. Each academic calendar provides a different set of windows for research and writing. It is helpful if you and your potential coauthor can schedule the timing of your research to maximize both of your efforts. This may mean carving out time to work together, or alternatively trading off responsibility for drafting the next version. Depending on your writing habits, it may be easiest to work with someone on the same academic calendar as your institution, or perhaps to find someone who has time to write when you are consumed with teaching.

Do you and your potential coauthor have compatible goals? That is, do you and your potential coauthor have similar visions of where the finished manuscript will be placed, how quickly the project will be completed, the sophistication of the analysis and who maintains responsibility for which components of the project? Recognizing differences in advance and coming to an agreement on each of these issues will make the submission process much easier. Sharing a vision of the project and the end results is critical to the success of the project.

Do you and your potential coauthor have the ability to accept criticism and praise from each other? While it’s nice to get praise from your coauthor, it’s perhaps more important to be open to criticism and rejection. The ability to accept corrections and a willingness to change direction will improve the final project and allow you and your coauthor to fully explore all of the potential avenues that may enhance the project without fear of rejection or conflict.

Does your potential coauthor possess any special assets? Finally, does your potential coauthor bring anything special to the table? Do they know the editor of a particularly high-ranking journal? Do they possess an extraordinary data set? Do they have the ability to work in a foreign language? While one of these qualities shouldn’t be the sole reason for selecting a coauthor, it may open a previously closed door and make a particular project more feasible or less costly.

While affirmative answers to these questions can’t guarantee a productive research relationship, a little forethought about them may increase the likelihood of a successful collaboration and an enjoyable research experience. This list isn’t a list of prerequisites and by no means does a collaborator need to possess all of these characteristics. Wonderful research projects can happen serendipitously, but thinking strategically about potential coauthors can also provide a rich experience and result in a top-tier publication.
Some Thoughts from the Past President: Building a New Generation of Social Scientists

By Leslie R. Alm

At almost every Western Social Science Association (WSSA) conference I have attended, a few (and I want to emphasize that it is only a few) of my colleagues have been critical of the number of students (both graduate and undergraduate) who are attending and presenting their papers throughout the multidisciplinary panels that are the mainstays of our conference. Some have even stated that it was demeaning to have to participate on a panel with a student. When approached with such feelings, I am often at a loss for words, as one of the major missions of WSSA (maybe the primary mission) is to bring young scholars into the social sciences—and what better way to do this than having students participate in the scholarly activity of formally presenting their work at a scholarly conference?

Over the past several years I have supported students of mine attending WSSA and presenting a paper at a particular disciplinary panel. My students have presented in the Public Administration, Political Science, Environmental and Natural Resources, Canadian Studies, and Association of Borderland Studies sections. Of the WSSA student attendees with whom I’ve worked, they have all gone on to a higher-degree level program (be it a master’s or PhD program) or into social sciences related careers. All benefited enormously from their experience. All commented on the collegiality of the people attending the WSSA conference, and all went away with a positive feeling about how social science can directly affect the way we live. Just as importantly, for WSSA to continue to grow we need these young and upcoming scholars to become active members of WSSA and generate enthusiasm for the social sciences in general. With that said, several of the students I have supported have continued to return to WSSA, and that is a good thing!
More and more people are accepting the presence of climate change in our lives. The role of social science in helping direct the debate about climate change is equally undeniable. Unlike natural scientists who provide the factual fodder for global temperature measurement and perspective on how that temperature relates to earlier earthly eras, social scientists chronicle public opinion about the environment, the extent to which environmental policy making is inclusive of the multitude of stakeholders with massive interest in the policy outcome, and the interactions of the policy making agencies in the creation of law and regulation.

In Alm, Burkhart, and Simon's book Turmoil in American Public Policy: Science, Democracy, and the Environment, social scientists and natural scientists are interviewed regarding their perceived roles in environmental policy making. Natural scientists have a more distant view of their work affecting policy making than do social scientists, who are more used to conceiving their work as being of greater utility within the public affairs arena. Natural scientists have a tendency to believe that their fact-generating enterprise stands as is, without the need to enter the political world; facts are facts. Social scientists, on the other hand, tend to imagine their work eventually percolating itself in to the public policy making debates.

However, again to reference Alm, Burkhart, and Simon's work, while scientists as a group are differentiated from others in their use of the scientific method to acquire knowledge, the work of scientists is still circumscribed by the simple fact that our planet is political, with our everyday interactions being constrained by the politics of the situation. Thus, there are limits on the desire of social scientists to frame and shape the environmental policy making discussion. Further complicating the picture is that for scientists to be useful in environmental policy making, they must be perceived as separate from politics, measuring in as objective a manner as possible the extent to which the planet has warmed, and to what extent global warming can be attributed to human activities.

Hence, we arrive at one frustration that the public, and its elected officials, has with scientists: our predilection to speak in probabilistic terms. There are rarely any definitive "yes – no" answers that come from the mouths of scientists who follow the scientific method. It is a rigorous method, and the conclusions that are derived from the scientific methods demand criticism and close examination from one's colleagues. Those conclusions are very frequently couched in the likelihood that they will come to pass. In fact, taking conclusions too far has gotten climate scientists into some trouble. For instance, NASA climate scientist Jim Hansen is notable for ignoring industry practice of probabilistic conclusions and instead making sweeping statements about global warming (cf. Mark Bowen, Censoring Science: Inside the Political Attack on Dr. James Hansen and the Truth of Global Warming). Social science, too, is right to be cautious, as a credible voice at the policy making table is at stake.

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**STUDENT LETTER**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Aresta Tsosie LaRusso and I am a citizen of the Navajo Nation. I am a full-time graduate student in the American Indian Studies program with a focus on law and policy at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona.

When I decided to attend the 2013 Western Social Sciences Association (WSSA) conference in Denver, Colorado to present my research, Second Generation Navajo Children of Relocation: Inheriting Intergenerational Losses Due to P.L. 93-53, I was not quite sure how I was going to fulfill my commitment due to financial constraints. Through the WSSA student travel grant program, I was able to attend and present with success.

(cont. on pg. 11)
Hunger is a serious problem in the United States. Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org), a charity that coordinates a network of 200 member food banks across the country, reports that 49.1 million Americans were living in food insecure households in 2013. This includes 33.3 million adults and 15.8 million children! Food security is the ability to acquire enough nutritionally adequate and safe food for an active and healthy life at all times in socially acceptable ways. This excludes obtaining food through scavenging or buying expired or damaged foods, consuming non-food items, other people’s leftovers, or road kill or by resorting to illegal means to acquire food. Households are considered food insecure if they experience three or more of the following conditions: cutting the size of meals, skipping meals, running out of food with no money to buy more, being hungry but not being able to eat because of lack of food or money to buy food, and changing eating patterns away from purchasing healthier foods options (lean proteins, fresh fruit and vegetables) to a more basic diet dominated by lower-cost, less nutritionally dense foods (potatoes, rice, pasta, processed flour).

The Oregon Food Bank Network (http://www.oregonfoodbank.org) is dedicated to eradicating food insecurity by helping individuals and their communities increase their self-sufficiency and food security status. However, with unemployment rates and food, gas, and housing prices remaining high, demand for their services has increased. It has climbed 41% since the economic downturn in 2008. For the third year in a row, the Oregon Food Bank Network has distributed more than 1 million emergency food boxes in Oregon and Clark County, Washington. A typical emergency food box provides a three- to five-day supply of groceries. Those boxes provide meals for 270,000 people per month, 92,000 of which are children (34%). In addition, the food bank provided the resources to provide 3.9 million emergency meals at soup kitchens and shelters.

However, the Oregon Food Banks does much more than distribute food. They work to eliminate the root causes of hunger by improving the self-sufficiency of low-income families through advocacy, nutrition education, garden education, and strengthening local food systems within communities. They host nutrition education classes in their kitchen, where volunteers teach cooking techniques, food safety, practical shopping techniques, and meal planning to help low income families improve their food access and quality. {cont. on pg. 8}
They have also launched a “Learning Gardens” Program in two locations around Portland. These gardens serve to bring community members together to help build social capital, strengthen community ties, and improve local food access. Participants can sign up for the **Seed to Supper** program, which is a five-week beginning gardening course, or **Dig In!**, in which community members work together to grow organic food for distribution to hunger-relief agencies in Multnomah and Washington counties.

The Western Social Science Association is proud to announce that we are continuing our tradition of holding an annual fund raising event that gives back to our conference host community. Last year, we raised over $2000 for the Road Runner Food Bank of New Mexico at our Albuquerque conference. This year, our annual conference fund raiser in Portland will benefit the work of the Oregon Food Bank. The Oregon Food Bank is a 501c(3) non-profit organization, so your donation is tax deductible! If you are planning on attending the Portland conference, please look for the donation table on Friday April 10, during the breakfast and poster session. Your donations will be matched by the WSSA, so please contribute generously! Just $10 will feed a family of four for 3-5 days. If you are unable to attend the conference, please consider a direct donation on behalf of WSSA to the following link: https://community.oregonfoodbank.org/donatenow.

I look forward to seeing you at the donation table! I will have receipts for your donation and a variety of information about the Oregon Food Bank. Stop by and say hello! I’ll be there bright and early...

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**“Food Insecurity”, cont from pg. 7**

I am glad that, instead of me, it is our current General Program Chair, Heather Albanesi, who is putting all the pieces together. So how does WSSA carry out this complicated undertaking successfully while schooling a new General Program Chair every year, you ask? We did well in Denver (2013); Albuquerque (2014); and no doubt, will do so again in Portland (2015). Part of our secret is the **continuity** provided by Kate Herke, our Communications Director and Larry Gould, our Executive Director, who are always ready to assist the President-Elect, the Executive Council, and Section Coordinators when needed. For every conference-related problem, they have or will find the optimum solution based on their years of experience in these matters. Further, **planning** for the Conference begins early; at the Fall meeting of the Council at the host hotel in September. This is...
It was a statistical improbability; a poor, black, divorced, single parent from the East Side of San Jose, California presenting her Thesis research at the Western Social Sciences Association (WSSA) Conference. How did I get here? “I don’t belong here” was the recurring theme that was running through my mind as I began to discuss my research. My anxiety level was at an all-time high. I delivered my talk, engaged in stimulating discourse about my research, answered great questions and my presentation went off without a hitch.

Yet, the anxiety did not subside. I was frantically asking people “did I do ok?” “Maybe I should have omitted this bit of information, or maybe I should have created another slide to emphasize this point.” It was as if I was searching for validation for my feelings of self-doubt; then I could alleviate the discord I was experiencing. I distinctly remember another student in my cohort ask “why are you doubting yourself?” Though I could not answer her question in a substantive way at the moment, it was then that I decided to examine the genesis of the uncertainty that has been embedded in my brain regarding my academic capabilities.

I am an African American woman and a surviving victim of domestic violence. I was married to a very abusive man. The ten year cycle, of verbal, emotional, psychological, financial and physical abuse was extreme enough to warrant the relocation of my children and myself through the Victim Witness Protection Program in 2004. In 2006 I committed myself to academic pursuit and since then I have earned a bachelors and a master’s degree in sociology from the University of Colorado.

During my graduate program I was introduced to Peggy McIntosh’s article “Feeling Like a Fraud” (1985) and it strongly...
resonated with me. “Feeling like a fraud”, according to McIntosh, is first and foremost intentionally taught to us and the consequences of these feelings of unworthiness is that it perpetuates hierarchies. Another consequence may be that once acknowledged, we may eventually undermine hierarchies.

The intersecting, subordinated identities I embody as an African American woman and a survivor of interpersonal violence contributed to my feelings of fraudulence. Stereotypically, African American women’s identities are defined as embodying mythical strengths and being able to endure immense burdens (both physically and emotionally) without the need to elicit aid from others. This stereotype is commonly referred to as “the Strong Black Woman”. Conversely, domestic violence victims are labeled as “weak” due to the way society frames interpersonal violence. As a result of the dichotomous relationship between the two conflicting identities, it produced an extreme sense of dissonance within me, which undoubtedly participated in my “feeling like a fraud”. Presenting at the WSSA furnished agency within me to embrace my “feelings of fraudulence”, pursue my doctorate degree and soon join the ranks of academic scholars. As my experience attests, the WSSA is an integral component in the struggle to create social change and inclusiveness. By providing a platform for underrepresented voices, the WSSA serves as an active participant in undermining hierarchies that perpetuate feelings of fraudulence. I am grateful to have had this opportunity and to be a part of the struggle.

References
McIntosh, P. (1985) Feeling Like a Fraud in the Wellsley Centers For Women Working Papers, (Number#18; 1-11)
much before our usual December 1 deadline for submission of paper and panel proposals, Section Coor-
dinators typically communicate with their members even prior to that. Finally, the 
enthusiasm of students
who assist with registration and related tasks (Lahoma Howard, a doctoral student in my Department at Colorado State University, worked hard on the placement of the large number panels last year) makes eve-
rything come together.

Many of you have told me personally and through emails how much you enjoyed the fruitful scholarly
discussions, many scheduled events, and the general ambiance of our Albuquerque 2014 Conference.
Thank you. As you prepare your paper or panel proposal to join colleagues in Portland, April 8--11, 2015, here are my answers to two questions that you did not ask. Did I learn a lot about the internal
workings of organizing academic conferences from my Albuquerque experience? Yes, more than I ever
wanted to know. Am together for our next meeting? Yes, more and more, as various conference deadlines
approach.
See you in Portland!

N. Prabha Unnithan
President, Western Social Science Association