In July 2017, we led nine students (Logan Barboza, Madeline Bengela, Jacalyn DeSelms, Theresa McCario, Abdullah Nooh, Meg Perry, Louis Tehan, Melissa Tehan, and Perfenee Womack) in a sociology and anthropology field school in the Dominican Republic. This program provided a unique opportunity for us to work together on a research project in collaboration with a local partner organization, Project Esperanza. The objective of the project was to gather data on sociodemographic characteristics of families with children who attend our partner organization’s grassroots bilingual Haitian Creole and Spanish school. The purpose was to collect information that would inform programs and services.

The 15-day trip was intense and filled with various kinds of educational activities. For the majority of the two weeks, we spent the mornings engaging in participant-observation of our partner organization’s annual summer English camp for kids, the afternoons conducting household surveys, and the evenings entering the survey data into a database. We also explored local culture and history by visiting museums, monuments, and a coffee farm. This experience pushed us to develop our research skills, foster our cultural competence, and enhance our abilities to be responsible global citizens. We examined the challenging local realities, as well as thought critically about our place and work in this context.

Given our previous experience in the Dominican Republic, we already had a deep appreciation for the country and its culture. This program, however,
Students and faculty (Top left: Jacalyn DeSelms, Meg Perry, Perfenee Womack, Logan Barboza, Louis Tehan, Dr. Karie Peralta, and Theresa McCario. Bottom left: Melissa Tehan, Dr. Shahna Arps, and Abdullah Nooh) presented on their field school research in the Dominican Republic at the 2017 Ohio Latin Americanist Conference at The Ohio State University in October.

From Fiction to Reality:
Fifty Shades of Sociology

Barbara Coventry, Ph.D. & Patricia Case, Ph.D.

The geneses of scholarly activities can be diverse. Our current research project began as a “water-cooler” conversation about the Fifty Shades of Grey series. This casual discussion has turned into a multi-stage research project, involving an on-line survey and focus groups. The analyses of the survey data are producing multiple manuscripts. In our initial paper, we explore whether or not feminist values affect respondents’ attitudes towards the romantic patterns found in Fifty Shades that have been associated with interpersonal violence. In addition, we are applying Bogardus’ social distance scale to interactions between the series’ two main characters, Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey. We seek to determine if one’s connection to a participant in a dominant/submissive relationship affects one’s level of acceptance of these relationships. In spring 2018, we plan to convene focus groups to more deeply delve into these issues.

The success of this program hinged on the participation of our partner organization, particularly the local guides and interpreters. We want to thank them for their hard work, patience, and understanding. We also want to thank our Department Chair, Dr. Patricia Case, who was a strong advocate for this initiative. Last, we want to acknowledge our students for being an amazing group. We had high expectations of them, and they exceeded them all. •
New for the Fall 2017 semester, is the Medical Sociology in Community Practice service-learning course (SOC 4/5980) led by Dr. Monita Mungo. This is a service-learning course designed with the assistance of Heartland Hospice Care to expose students to the hospice environment while examining the social processes that are associated with dying, death, and grief. Students volunteer as “friendly visitors” at local hospices playing cards, conversing, and attending special activities with hospice patients.

Graduate Student Engages in Professional Conference

Sociology Graduate Student Elissa Vaitkus represented UT at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting this past August in Montreal, Canada. Elissa participated in a round-table discussion with her focused theme titled: The “Slow Boil” of the Alt Right: How Extremist Groups Benefit from Informality and Decentralization.

Archaeological Explorations into a Cahokian Neighborhood

This past summer, I co-directed an archaeological field project through the Institute for Field Research (IFR) at the Indigenous North American city of Cahokia (just east of modern St. Louis, MO). This program offers opportunities for undergraduate training in archaeological field methods while taking part in an active research project. Students from all over the US participate in the IFR field courses.

Cahokia is the largest Indigenous urban area north of Mexico, inhabited between A.D. 1050 and 1350, with peak populations for the entire metropolitan area likely around 40,000 people. Our research at Cahokia began in 2015 with a geophysical survey of an area adjacent to the “downtown” of the city (dubbed the Spring Lake Tract), with the goal of identifying and exploring a neighborhood adjacent to a series of borrow pits (places from which Cahokians removed soil used to build the more than 200 earthen pyramids in the area).

We returned in 2016 to excavate three magnetic anomalies (places with increased magnetic properties indicative of archaeological features like buildings) identified during the geophysical survey. Excavations confirmed the presence of a large rectangular building (of which we excavated half), two overlapping buildings (of which we excavated only a small portion), and identified an aboriginally re-filled borrow pit.

Our excavations in the summer of 2017 involved six field school students, including one UT undergrad. We returned to the Spring Lake Tract to excavate the remainder of the large rectangular building and at least one of the two superimposed buildings. The large building was semi-subterranean, meaning the floor of the building was more than half a meter below the ground surface. The size of the structure indicates that it was more than a domestic building. It had been formally closed-down at the end of its use, by covering the floor with a clean grey clay, then filled in one large episode with soil, large pottery pieces, a lot of deer bone, fragments of at least two pipes, and sandstone palettes. This material suggests that it was probably filled in with the remains of a feast that was likely held to commemorate that building. Once we excavated through the fill of this...
In the Lab: 
**Hands-On Research**

In the North American Archaeology Lab students continue to gain hands-on experience analyzing artifacts and working on their own independent research projects.

Osteology Lab resources provide students the opportunity to engage paleontological research questions with an array of hominid casts. The human osteology collection also provides an opportunity to learn about human skeletal morphology and paleopathology.

College of Arts & Letters Technology Funding has led the acquisition of a 3D printer & scanner. These provide an opportunity to print and utilize even more materials to incorporate into class activities and provide opportunities for students to engage in 3D morphological analyses.

Building, we recognized an earlier building constructed in the shape of a T, a building type that is well known to be an important politico-religious structure at Cahokia. The reuse of this same location for public buildings indicates a stable neighborhood organization potentially centered on these gathering locations over the course of the 12th century.

The superimposed buildings also demonstrate reuse of space in this neighborhood. The earlier building dates to the 12th century A.D., was also semi-subterranean and appears to have had a clay bench along the north wall of the building. The building was burned as part of the termination practice, which preserved woven grass matting that likely hung on the walls of the structure. The basin of this building was then packed in with soil and artifacts and a second building was built above it.

This second building likely dates to the late 12th or early 13th century. We also continued excavations into the refilled borrow pit. Cahokians began refilling this borrow pit by depositing charcoal-rich soils, large pieces of pottery, projectile points, pieces of copper and at least two quartz crystals (utilized in religious ceremonies). Above this level were alternating layers of light and dark soils that were largely devoid of material; this practice of layering is very similar to that noted in earthen pyramid construction. We will return to the Cahokia area in the summer of 2019 to explore other neighborhoods at increasing distance from “downtown” to explore whether they were organized in similar. This summer (2018) I will be offering an archaeological field school here in the Toledo area.

**Message from the Chair**

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology is an exciting place to be in 2017. We have increased the number of experiential learning opportunities we provide and developed more opportunities for students to be engaged in active research. Our students have published, presented at regional and national conferences and won awards for their undertakings during this time. Faculty members have been engaged in exciting and important research projects as well as taking on leadership roles in the university. Although we consist of two academic disciplines, we collectively view our responsibility as two-fold.

First, we provide our students with an outstanding undergraduate education that prepares them to take on professional responsibilities or continue their graduate education. Second, we acknowledge our responsibility to the greater Toledo community by positioning our students in real life settings during their academic careers allowing their academic successes to have a direct impact in the community we live in and serve as an academic institution.

This means that we take our classroom into the community, whether that is building relationships for internships, looking for archeological evidence of the area’s earlier inhabitants, working internationally to understand global issues with urban poverty, or collaborating with local non-profit organizations to work on an important issue(s).

Our continuing efforts for the next year will focus not only on maintaining our commitment to our existing programs but also to developing new opportunities for student success. We are in the process of developing a new pathway to completing a graduate degree in 5 years (4 years as an undergraduate plus one additional graduate year) and a graduate certificate in Applied Research. Finally, we are developing outreach programs with local high schools that will provide our current students with experiential learning opportunities as they also connect with and give back to the community.

- Patricia Case, Ph.D. 
  Acting Chair, 
  Associate Dean 
  College of Arts & Letters