The faculty members who joined us in the fall of 2005 are closing in on a productive year at Stockton. This newsletter is a collection of abstracts of their current research. It has been a pleasure to work closely with the entire group of newly-hired faculty; they have been most cooperative and gracious.

They have expressed appreciation for the support they received from the Institute for Faculty Development and to all of this year’s workshop presenters. Faculty are pleased to have had the opportunities to affiliate with the senior faculty who lead their workshops and with members of their cohort group from across divisions. They have also expressed their gratitude for the junior faculty grants that were offered in the fall and for the Research and Professional Development grants awarded this spring. These grants, in fact, are funding several of the research projects that are described in the newsletter.

Additionally, the new faculty wish to thank colleagues who have helped them draft and edit proposals, acted as mentors in and outside of their programs, and generally helped them to get their bearings during their first year at Stockton.

- Sonia V. Gonsalves
  Interim Director, Institute for Faculty Development

Nathan Long, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing

I am currently working on a collection of short stories titled *Conveyance* with the help of an RNPD grant. When complete, *Conveyance* will be composed of about 30 short pieces (one to twenty pages in length), linked thematically by travel—via foot, car, plane, train, bus, etc. While both travel writing and the “road trip” novel are popular in American literature, there are few story collections that center on modes of travel rather than destination, and which particularly examine how each method of transportation affects a character’s psychology and actions. *Conveyance* was conceived to explore these themes and to share, in fictional form, the eclectic images and characters I witnessed during my travels across the U.S.

Early on, this project was awarded a Virginia Commission of the Arts grant, which enabled me time to write much of the manuscript. To date, I have completed twenty-three stories in the collection, twelve of which I have placed in literary journals such as *Story Quarterly*, *Indiana Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Natural Bridge*, and *Salt Hill*. Two of these stories have been accepted into anthologies (*Mother Knows* [Washington Square Press, 2004] and *The Way We Work* [ed. Mary Boyes, 2006]).
Currently, I have over sixty additional stories in draft form. During the grant period—this summer—I plan to cull from these about seven more pieces to finish the collection. My work then will be to revise and order these last stories within the collection—so as to have a completed manuscript at the end of the grant period. It is my intention then to submit the finished manuscript to both small presses and to short story collection contests the following year.

Laurie Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

I have recently completed research on regulatory decision making and the significance of human agency in the development of sentencing guidelines for organizations. The United States Sentencing Commission promulgated federal organizational sentencing guidelines in 1991. The final product eroded the guidelines’ original severity, as drafts were rejected over a period of four years. The initial goal of the Commission was to implement organizational guidelines that were on par with individual-level sanctions in order to remove any suggestion that powerful corporations receive lesser penalties than individuals convicted of “street crimes.” This study analyzes the erosion of the Commission’s stated goal by evaluating the organizational structures, individual and group characteristics, and the social, political, economic, and historical contexts involved in the evolution of federal sentencing guidelines for organizations. Results indicate that, while structural-level variables played a large part in explaining the development of the guidelines, a more accurate and complete understanding of this process is possible by including an analysis of the individual-level characteristics of Commissioners, including their professional backgrounds, ideological perspectives, styles of leadership, and future goals.

This research is complete, will be presented at the American Society of Criminology conference in November 2006, and will be submitted to the journal Law and Society within the next several months.

I am also conducting research on the legislation surrounding the use of a new form of contraception. Emergency contraception, or more specifically, the “morning-after pill”, has generated significant debate of late. The issue is not safety: the morning-after pill has been shown to be safe in numerous studies. Instead, moral and political issues have confounded efforts to market the pill to American women. Several Food and Drug Administration officials have recently resigned in protest over the FDA’s refusal to allow over-the-counter sales of the pill, some pharmacists are refusing to dispense it, and conservative groups are lobbying to retain the pill’s status as a prescription drug or remove it from the American market altogether.

This research is a qualitative study of the history and continuing debate surrounding the morning-after pill and will include interviews, either in person or by telephone, with key players in the story of the pill’s development and marketing. Interviews will be conducted with representatives of the pill’s U.S. manufacturer, Barr Laboratories of Pomona, NY, representatives of organizations lobbying both for and against the proposed over-the-counter status of the pill, political representatives, consumers, and others involved in the dispute over the pill’s status in
the U.S. In addition, archival data and news reports will be utilized to more fully detail the manner in which this medication has been and continues to be a source of controversy.

Junior faculty funds were used to purchase a transcription machine and to hire an undergraduate research assistant for the Spring 2006 semester who is assisting with library research and the gathering of news reports. Additional funding will be sought to facilitate the completion of the study.

This research is co-authored with Professor Emeritus Gilbert Geis of the University of California, Irvine, and will be prepared for future presentation and publication.

Connie Tang, Assistant Professor of Psychology

I am conducting a study on young children’s awareness of how and when knowledge was acquired. Between ages 3 and 5, young children progressively develop the ability to identify some sources of their knowledge, such as how knowledge was acquired and who imparted the knowledge. However, previous research has shown that even at 5, children have difficulty recognizing when knowledge was acquired. In this study, I plan to test the hypothesis that when asked to identify the temporal distance (i.e., the amount of time that has elapsed since the event, such as when answering the question of “How long ago did it happen?”), rather than the temporal location (i.e., the linkage between an event and a point in some time pattern, such as when answering the question of “Did it happen yesterday?”) of learning events, 4- and 5-year-old children will report when knowledge was acquired as well as how knowledge was acquired. The above hypothesis was derived from the theory that the understanding of temporal distance is present early in development, whereas the understanding of temporal location continues to develop well into the middle to late childhood. Four- and 5-year-old children will be recruited from local preschools. A week before the interview, children will have either heard about or been shown two toys housed in drawers in a striped-color organizer. On the interview day, children will either hear about or see two other toys housed in a solid color organizer and take part in a 15-minute interview. During the interview, children will be asked how and when they learned about the toys in the organizers. The above research is supported by a divisional fund for junior faculty.

Vincent Cicirello, Assistant Professor of Computer Science

My research in the field of artificial intelligence can generally be described as focusing on the coordination and control of multiple problem solvers. One specific research area of interest is the coordination of multiple intelligent agents (including both software agents as well as robotic agents). The field of multi-agent systems is fast growing with its important applications that include modeling and simulation of large-scale logistics problems, homeland security
related applications (e.g., facilitating coordination and management of first-response situations [3]), modeling and simulation of biological systems, planning & scheduling (e.g., project scheduling, production scheduling, process planning), etc. One important problem related to multi-agent systems is how to effectively coordinate very many autonomous computational agents—a problem that spans numerous academic disciplines such as game theory, decision theory, control theory, distributed systems, among others.

Recently, I have been continuing a line of research begun during my dissertation years that combines my interests in multi-agent coordination with my research interests in heuristics and metaheuristics. Heuristics and metaheuristics are typically employed to solve many optimization problems that are either too large or too poorly understood for a more disciplined mathematical approach to be effective. They trade off guarantees of finding optimal solutions in favor of finding “sufficiently good” solutions within computational resource constraints (e.g., limited time and/or memory). I am specifically interested in how to effectively integrate multiple heuristic problem solvers, combining the strengths of each. For example, can we use problem solving feedback to better allocate computational resources among a set of metaheuristics? Results of this research have been published in peer-reviewed archival conference proceedings and journals—most prominent among these is a paper [1] that won the Outstanding Paper Award at the 2005 National Conference on Artificial Intelligence held this past July in Pittsburgh as well as a paper detailing a more recent empirical study [2] that has been nominated for a Best Paper Award at this year’s Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference (final award decision will be made after the presentation at the conference this coming July in Seattle). This summer, as part of an R&PD grant, I will be expanding upon a set of benchmark problem instances for a computationally hard scheduling problem that I use in this research, developing an algorithm to generate lower bounds on solution quality, and disseminating the problem set and related information on a webpage where others can submit and compare results.

Selected Recent Relevant Publications:


Norma Boakes, Assistant Professor of Education

Norma Boakes, a full-time instructor for the Office of Teacher Education, just completed her doctoral dissertation research. Her study titled “The Effects of Origami Lessons on Students Spatial Visualization Skills and Achievement Levels in a Seventh-grade Mathematics Classroom” focused on the use of Origami, the art of paper folding, as an instructional method in the mathematics classroom.

The purpose of her research was to explore the potential of spatial-based training to improve students’ spatial visualization abilities through the use of Origami-mathematics lessons. Origami, though a commonly used instructional tool recognized for its connection to spatial ability and mathematics, has yet to be utilized in research as a method for improving children’s spatial skills. Norma developed a treatment of twelve Origami lessons as part of a month-long geometry unit of a mathematics course. Using a group of seventh-grade students from a nearby middle school, one set of students received traditional geometry instruction while the other set of students received traditional geometry instruction in addition to a collection of Origami-mathematics lesson. Mathematics achievement and spatial abilities, specifically visualization, were assessed by means of pre- and post-tests administered prior to the start of the geometry unit and at the conclusion of the unit. A 2 (group) x 2 (gender) factorial design was then used to analyze data gathered.

Analyses of Covariance were calculated for each of the three spatial tests and the mathematics achievement tests. For spatial abilities, a significant interaction was found between group and gender for the Card Rotation Test with males that received treatment showing increased gains while females of the same group showed a decrease in their spatial skills. The Surface Development Test and Mathematics Achievement Test revealed no significant interactions of group and gender or by group or gender independently. Though results were inconsistent, Origami-mathematics lessons blended within traditional instruction were shown to be as beneficial as traditional instruction in terms of mathematics achievement.

Norma’s work was supported by the Junior Faculty Grant program offered by each of the divisions at the college. The funds provided allowed for her to professionally videotape and photograph her work as well as purchase the supplies needed to implement her research.

Teaming with faculty members in the College of Education at Temple University, Norma has also worked for two years on project “Earthlinks”. This project, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), provided pre-service teachers in Temple’s elementary teacher certification program with a variety of professional development opportunities in an effort to improve their ability and willingness to teach Earth Science in elementary settings.
Six pre-service teachers at Temple University were involved in the “Earthlinks” project over the 2 year period. “Earthlinks” provided the pre-service teachers with a number of different activities in an effort to improve their knowledge of science and instructional methods of teaching science. It was hypothesized that by providing these supports, pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy and ability to teach inquiry-based science lessons would improve.

Using a case-study method, a variety of data was collected. A pre- and post-test of self-efficacy assessment was used to determine how students’ perceived ability to teach science effectively was impacted. A researcher-developed survey was also used to gather pre-service teachers’ willingness and preparedness to teach science. To judge participants’ instruction, teachers were video- and audio-taped in the field-based experience. In addition, pre-service teachers were observed instructing in the field and rated using an inquiry rubric.

Results gathered from the second year of the study indicate that pre-service teachers reported feeling competent and prepared to teach Earth Science and self-efficacy levels were improved.

Kristin Jacobson, Assistant Professor of American Literature

With the support of a Research and Professional Development grant, I am currently revising my book project, DOMESTIC GEOGRAPHIES: NEODOMESTIC AMERICAN FICTION. My book manuscript conducts interdisciplinary inquiry into the ways American society simultaneously safeguards, dismantles, and remakes the beloved space of the “home.” In this project I argue that rather than disappearing forever with the advent of new modernist forms and the rise of the new woman, the literary genre of domestic fiction is undergoing a renaissance in the late twentieth century. Incorporating feminist geography and literary analysis, my research defines and analyzes a recycled genre I call "neodomestic fiction." I examine novels as various as Toni Morrison’s PARADISE, Leslie Marmon Silko’s GARDENS IN THE DUNES, and Chang-rae Lee’s A GESTURE LIFE alongside material domestic culture (e.g., Census Bureau housing statistics). My project destabilizes and expands the American home’s traditional definition and challenges domesticity’s conventionally marginal place in literary and cultural studies. I will present part of this research at the American Literature Association's conference in May.

Christine Ferri, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Recently, Medicare launched a new prescription medication benefit for disabled and retired adults called Medicare Part D. This marks a significant overhaul in the Medicare benefit structure, with private insurance companies partnering with Medicare to offer myriad options for prescription plans.
I recently initiated a research project designed to determine what health care professionals and older adults know about Medicare Part D. Older adults, physicians, pharmacists, social work students and psychologists who work with older adults will take a short quiz to determine what they do and do not know about the plan. While the analyses will be primarily descriptive, between-group differences will also be examined. In addition to being presented at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, I hope the data will be used to develop a grant proposal to create educational programs for Medicare beneficiaries and health care professionals. This research project has been supported by division-based junior faculty funding.

Lucio Angelo Privitello, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion

Dr. Lucio Angelo Privitello has recently published an article on the philosophy of education of Chauncey Wright in a journal of American philosophy, "Transactions of the C.S. Peirce Society". This study makes up part of a book project on the philosophy of Wright, as well as part of a series of articles on the philosophy of education and pedagogy of classical American philosophers. A study of George Herbert Palmer's pedagogical methodology will follow. A study of the philosophy of education of Josiah Royce, a paper presented at the Royce Society at Vanderbilt University, is forthcoming in an edited volume from Fordham University Press. On the Continental (French) side of things, a chapter in an edited volume on Georges Bataille is forthcoming from Indiana University Press, as well as a piece on Herbert Marcuse, "Teaching Marcuse: A Critical Pedagogy of Aesthetic Dimensions", that highlights Marcuse's use of Schiller's Aesthetic Education of Man. Privitello has also published a study on film theory in sensesofcinema.com, specifically on Deleuze's (mis)reading of Visconti's rendition of the Sicilian classic, "The Leopard". As a product of this semester's experience in Introduction to Philosophy, and related to his Dissertation topic "Laughter and Animality," a manuscript is being prepared on the importance of jokes as philosophical investigations. He has recently presented papers at "The Examined Life: Teacher's Workshop", as well as the Classical Humanities Society at Stockton on topics in Greek Philosophy.

Michael Cronin, Assistant Professor of Social Work

I am working on projects in two areas at the moment, disaster mental health and social work advocacy and development.

An article, “Disaster Staff Support: A Social Work Perspective” is forthcoming in the journal, International Social Work. While extensive literature exists on disaster worker stress, little is found on how organizations can help workers cope with the stresses from disaster exposure. This article illustrates how social work principles are used in alleviating and managing disaster worker stress through an analysis of the mental health component that supports staff of the American Red Cross as applied in Greater New York. The article offers assistance to disas-
ter administrators, planners, and trainers as they develop support programs.

In February, I had participated in a project that developed a training model on psychological first aid and self care for emergency service workers of the Magen David Adom (MDA) in Jerusalem, Israel. The model was created with the assumption that there was a need to adapt an American model that would bridge the difference in culture, language, age, religion and ethnic diversities. The enthusiasm and high level of participation indicated a clear interest in learning about psychological support and promoting change in the current MDA organizational culture. This project has recently received generous funding to continue to the next phase to design a teaching model specifically for MDA instructors to train their own staff on an ongoing basis.

I have also written a chapter which will be published this summer in the book, Social Work around the World IV, by the IFSW Press. The chapter, “Social Work and the United Nations” focuses on the definition of social advocacy within the organizational framework of the UN system. Examples from New York, Geneva and Nairobi illustrate these efforts on current issues at the UN and the impact on social workers worldwide.

I am also working on a project to assist in the development of the Jordanian Association of Social Workers. This would be the first membership organization that would promote social work as a profession in Jordan, especially regarding professional values, standards, ethics, human rights, recognition, training and working conditions. We aim to organize the first “Meeting of the Profession” in a few months. Funding is currently being sought, and a paper will be written on the developed model for future presentation and publication.

As you can see, I have a busy summer ahead!

Christine Carracino, Assistant Professor of Mathematics

My two projects this year have been preparing a paper based on my thesis, and starting a new project related to my thesis work. In my thesis, I studied the Szegö kernel, an object with many applications in the field of analysis, my area of specialty within mathematics. The Szegö kernel is a function which depends on a set of variables. It has been studied extensively for certain sets, and I considered it for a new set. The goal with these types of problems is to try estimate the size of the function as it depends on the variables, and find out for which variables it is infinite and at what rate it becomes infinite. Depending on what the function looks
like, there are various theorems and techniques that help you understand it. They often do so by
telling you how it compares to simpler function. I obtained estimates for the Szegö kernel in
the new setting that show it behaves somewhat differently than in the more well-known set-
tings. I have submitted my paper to the Transactions of the American Mathematical Society.

Now I am working on a similar problem, the “d-bar-b” equation. In trying to understand
this equation, one comes upon an expression similar to the Szegö kernel I studied before. So I
am hopeful that I will be able to apply similar techniques or come up with useful new ones.
This work is part of a project which, if approved by the Provost and Deans’ Council, will be
supported by an R&PD grant. It is in collaboration with Jennifer Halfpap.

Brian Tyrrell, Assistant Professor of Business Studies

The following was sent to the Journal of Small Business Management for review this Spring. The paper was co-authored with Christian Hardigree, J.D., Skip Swerdlow, Ph.D., Andrew Feinstein, Ph.D. (all from UNLV) and Wes Roehl, Ph.D. of Temple University. The title of the paper is “I FOUGHT THE LAW AND THE LAW WON.” EMPLOYEES’ PERCEPTIONS OF SEX DIS-
CRIMINATION IN SMALL VS. LARGE US FRANCHISED HOTEL OPER-
TORS, AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

In 1963, the US Equal Pay Act mandated equal pay for equal or similar work between
men and women. In 1964, Title VII of the US Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination on the
basis of sex. Despite 41 years of legal efforts, employment discrimination still exists in busi-
nesses today, and there is evidence that it is growing at an alarming rate. The statistics on the
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) webpage show that approximately
80,000 discrimination charges are filed each year, with approximately 30% of those charges
relating to discrimination on the basis of sex (EEOC, 2005a). This is in addition to whatever
may have occurred at the state, local, and federal agency levels.

This study examines the attitudes of managers and employees in small (fewer than 150
rooms) and large (more than 150 rooms) franchised lodging operations throughout the US re-
garding issues of gender discrimination. Specifically, attitudes toward issues of sex discrimina-
tion were reviewed to assess their potential effect on employee productivity and customer ser-
vice. These results support the general belief that discrimination on the basis of gender exists in
the workplace today. Specifically, more women believe that discrimination exists than
men. Furthermore, managers believe that discrimination exists to a greater degree than their
subordinates. Notably, the results of this study indicated that there was less evidence and
awareness of sex discrimination in the franchise hotel industry than in the organizations sur-
vveyed in other segments of the hospitality industry. Yet, a significant number of franchise hotel
employees do believe that sex discrimination exists to some degree and that opportunities and
the work environment could be more favorable.
This study utilized the Field Institute’s California Poll survey to determine the attitudes of franchised lodging employees regarding sex discrimination in the workplace. Chi-square statistics were calculated in determining whether or not significant differences existed between the perceptions of sex discrimination in the workforce between men and women as well as managers and subordinates. The results indicate that significant gender differences are quite prevalent. This article seeks to provide recommendations to management and the small business owner for ensuring a gender neutral, fair and equitable workplace.

The following abstract is for a paper just sent out for review to the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. This is the second paper dealing with consumer complaint behavior on-line, the first having been published by the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing. In the current paper, Michael Scales joins me along with faculty from both Purdue University and UNLV.

**CYBERGRIPING: VIOLATING THE LAW WHILE E-COMPLAINING**

The emergence of Web communications has given rise to complaint sites which serve as central forums for both consumers and employees to share their bad experiences. These complaint sites provide for cybergripping in various forms. This paper explores the concept of cybergripping and its relevance to the hospitality and tourism industry from employee and customer perspectives. Court cases in which cybergripping played a key role are reviewed and we offer recommendations on how hospitality and tourism businesses can address the problem of cybergripping.

**Ramya Vijaya, Assistant Professor of Economics**

This summer I will be using the R&PD grant to extend my research on the gender patterns of trade-related job losses in the US manufacturing industries. I will also be conducting a detailed analysis of the gender-sensitivity of current and proposed trade adjustment assistance for workers. A preliminary survey of previous research and data indicates that women make up a larger percentage of the trade related job losses. This is further substantiated by the larger presence of women among the recipients of the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. According to the U.S. Department of Labor statistics, women accounted for 55 percent of the total TAA recipients in 2004. I will be conducting a detailed industry level analysis to understand the reasons for the dominance of women among those negatively impacted by trade and use the findings to explore gender-sensitive policy options for compensation displaced workers. I presented preliminary empirical trends at the Eastern Economics Association conference in Philadelphia in February. Over the summer I will be finishing the empirical analysis. I will also be working on developing a framework to assess the gender implications of the TAA program at the U.S. Gender and Trade Network (USGTN) office in Washington DC. The USGTN is a network of feminist researchers and activists that aims to promote economic literacy about the impact of trade and trade pacts on living standards.