Letter From The Editors of
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The Sociology Department at Santa Clara University is proud to present, in this volume of the *Silicon Valley Sociological Review*, four research papers written by students majoring in sociology or taking sociology classes. Professor Marilyn Fernandez launched the *Silicon Valley Notebook* 17 years ago as a vehicle of professional socialization, to provide many students with a meaningful opportunity to benefit from steady guidance while honing their research and writing skills.

This year, the *Silicon Valley Notebook* took on a new name -- the *Silicon Valley Sociological Review* -- and a new editorial approach. But just as in past years, the substantive, theoretical, methodological, and applied content of the Sociology curriculum at SCU are reflected in these papers. These papers highlight students' ability to engage in meaningful professional work informing sociological understanding of important topics. The authors studied important social topics about individuals, organizations, and institutions.

Emma Hmelar's paper "Community Connections: Baseline Literacy and Math Skills Evaluations for Person-centered Programming" uses mixed-methods to apply sociology in a community-based setting. She collected evaluations on basic independent living skills among individuals with disabilities. Statistical analyses of these evaluations were used to assess current ability levels and needs of clients in a community program. Based on these findings, the researcher provided recommendations for an evidence-based beginning literacy program and evaluations to further the independence of clients with disabilities.

Sose Grum and **Taylor Czasnojc**'s paper shifts our focus to a different learning-focused organization in "Inequalities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics for First-Generation College Women Compared to Their Female Continuing-Generation Counterparts." In this work, the authors combine a literature review and qualitative interviews to analyze some of the challenges facing college women based on parental college experience. By focusing on women who are majoring in biological sciences, they are able to look in more detail at the differential effects of being a first-generation college student compared to having a parent who has attended college. The researchers find that first-generation college women face greater pressures to secure their financial futures and meet family expectations about careers.

Carolina Salame's "Corruption Within the Police Force" considers the systemic and institutional racism inherent in police violence. Relying on victim experiences, Salame shows how racism is embedded in the actions and presumed independence of the police. Her research has policy implications. She recommends better screening processes and public oversight to audit the police, combat institutional racism, and reduce tensions in day-to-day policing.

Finally, **Maria Abastillas, Isabel Michael, and Terrell Smith**'s "Howard Becker: An Intellectual Appreciation" provides a comprehensive account of a famous sociologist. The authors review three of Becker's contributions to the arts, urban and inner-cities, and research methods. All three have implications for the various subdisciplines of sociology—urban sociology, cultural sociology, and the sociology of crime—and shed light on future analysis.

As a collection, the student research presented in this volume exemplifies the evidence-based social science curriculum offered by the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University. The social issues explored have important policy and programmatic implications. These applications resonate with the University's mission to prepare students of competence, conscience, and compassion, who will help fashion a more just, humane, and sustainable word.

Our cover art for this volume comes from talented senior Madeline Mott, a double major in Studio Art and Sociology. The piece is titled "Galapagos."