

DSU Graduate Students and Faculty Present at Academic Conference

Starkville, MS, DATE, 2008 - On February 21 and 22, students and faculty of the Community Development program and representatives of the Institute for Community-Based Research at Delta State University (DSU) attended and presented research at the 2008 Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association's (A-MSA) Annual Meeting held on the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville, MS.

Community Development Hearin Fellows Eric Atchison, Regan Hall, and Mechelle Wallace, along with AmeriCorps*VISTA Ryan Betz, presented papers on topics of community redevelopment on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, social capital and community interaction, the Mississippi Delta Leaders Empowering Youth (MDLEY) program, and health and health-care assessment from the perspective of Mississippi Delta emergency room patients.

Regan Hall, a Hearin Fellow in the Community Development program, received First Place in the Graduate Student Paper Competition for her paper titled *Social Capital and Community Interaction: A Case Study of Two Organizations in an Arkansas Delta Town*. This is the second year in a row that a Hearin Fellow has taken top honors at the meeting. The student papers were started in Dr. Paulette Meikle-Yaw's Community Development Research Methods class.

Also participating at the A-MSA meeting were Dr. Alan Barton, Dr. Albert Nylander, and Dr. John Green. Dr. Barton presented a paper titled *Attitudes about Smoking Bans in the Mississippi Delta* using data gathered from the Delta Rural Poll, which Barton directs, as well as two academic posters: *Fostering Student Engagement through Service Learning: Building University-Community-Protected Area Partnerships for Sustainable Development*; and *Perceptions of Social Problems in the Mississippi Delta*. Nylander participated in a roundtable discussion on teaching sociology via the internet.

Green hosted the workshop *Applying Sociological Knowledge in the Public Sphere through Community-Based Research and Evaluation*. Green, director of the Institute for Community-Based Research, discussed the benefits and challenges of community-based research and evaluation. Community Development student Emanuel Edmonds joined Atchison, Betz and Wallace to discuss their experiences with the Institute to the workshop participants. Also, the papers that Atchison, Betz, and Wallace presented at the meeting were in collaboration with the Institute.

John Green was elected the position of A-MSA President Elect for 2009-2010, and DSU will host the 2010 A-MSA Annual Meeting.



Pictured (left to right): Zach Tatum, Mechelle Wallace, Eric Atchison, Carley Jeffcoat, Ryan Betz, Regan Hall, Emanuel Edmonds