

# DePaul American Studies

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## Newsletter Notes, Dr. Amy Tyson



(L to R: H. Peter Steeves, Rick Lee, Paul Booth, Anna Souchuk, Nancy Grossman, Amy Tyson)

On February 22, I was fortunate to be part of **DePaul Humanities Center** event: **The Scholar's Improv 2: Academic Boogaloo**, hosted by Humanities Center Director **H. Peter Steeves**. At the event, DePaul professors were joined by professional Chicago comedians. While the latter group performed improv, those of us in the former group gave 5-minute mini-lectures based on power-point presentations we had never seen before (and we joined them for some more comedy-based improv toward the end of the event). The goal was for the audience to see "that what academicians do by thinking, thinking on their feet, and making others think is a real art, and that what professional improv comedians do is a similarly intellectually and aesthetically rich enterprise worthy of serious scholarly reflection—as well as laughter." Although I arrived at the event with butterflies in my stomach, I was delighted that three out of the five featured professors were current Program Faculty for American Studies: **Paul Booth** (Media and Cinema Studies), **Nancy Grossman** (Honors Program), and well, myself. My delight was further extended when both of the audience volunteers that evening were American Studies majors: **Graham Nilles**, and **Katie O'Reilly**. Both Graham and Katie assisted the comics with improvisational games. I'd like to think that the stand-out showing of American Studies faculty and students at this event was because AMS folks are drawn to expressions of interdisciplinary studies and so, — to borrow a phrase used by one of my graduate school mentors **David Noble** (emeritus professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota)— also are drawn to the "unpredictable creativity" that interdisciplinary studies (and improv) demands.



(American Studies major Katie O'Reilly, second from right, performing with improv comics)

Once again, our newsletter features three spotlights that highlight the unpredictable creativity of our faculty, students, and alumni. Our faculty profile features **Barbara Schaffer**, a long-time American Studies program faculty whose work has helped advance diversity initiatives at DePaul; graduating American Studies major **Noah Barth**, whose DePaul career has been defined by the intersection of public service, sexuality studies, and public historical/humanities work; and American Studies alumna **Brittany Hubbard**, who describes her journey from American Studies major to lawyer, with her own law practice serving artists and creative professionals (Bright Lights Legal). Our final page introduces readers to our newest American Studies staff: **Amy Hildebrand**, a rising AMS senior and new student worker, and **Alicia Sanders**, our program assistant.

The features in this newsletter have been brought to you through the efforts of **Cindy Ramos**, our newsletter editor extraordinaire since Winter 2015. Cindy will be graduating this Spring, and this is her final newsletter. As she gears up to pursue her PhD at Penn State University this fall, all I can say is that it's been such a pleasure to work with her on this project for so long, and that I'm so very proud of her. And I miss her already.

-Amy M. Tyson  
Director, American Studies Program  
Associate Professor, History

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### April '17 AMS Newsletter

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## AMS Affiliated Faculty: Barbara Schaffer



**Barbara Schaffer**  
**M.A.**  
**Department of English**

Barbara Schaffer is an integral member of the DePaul community. She serves as a Lecturer in multiple departments and as the Associate Vice President of the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity. She has been able to truly champion interdisciplinary studies as an educator throughout a number of different courses. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in English from Washington University in St. Louis, and taught English, mainly Technical Writing and Non-Fiction Writing, at The University of Toledo before coming to DePaul in 1992.

Prior to teaching at DePaul, Barbara moved to California with her husband and worked at the University Art Museum at Berkeley. She worked at the film archive, the second film archive to emerge on the West Coast,

*San Francisco was the place for underground film-makers. My job with the film archive was to work with the underground filmmakers who were people like, at the time, Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, and Paul Mareski. Part of my job was to organize the filmmakers into talks every Wednesday night at the museum. We would watch films and then the filmmakers would discuss it. My husband and I finally decided that California was not a place for us. After he got his law degree, we moved to Chicago.*

Barbara started working at DePaul as a lecturer in the English Department and, throughout her time here, slowly began to expand to working with the Women's Studies Program, American Studies Program, and the College of Computing and Digital Media. In addition, In 1994 Barbara became the sexual harassment ombudsperson while still teaching. The sexual harassment policy at DePaul was still in the early phases of development, and Barbara had to oversee cases, policy, and training for the entire university. Eventually, the job became too large and in 1999 she became the founding director of the Sexual Harassment Policy Office, which merged with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (OIDE) in 2006. OIDE seeks to assist DePaul in achieving academic excellence, embrace DePaul's Vincentian heritage, create understanding, foster compassion, promote equal opportunity, and foster respect, inclusion and equity.

In addition to her administrative work, Barbara teaches a number of courses in AMS, MCS, and WGS including **AMS 250: American Autobiography**; **MCS 235: Film, Text, Culture**; **WGS 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**; **WGS 200: Women in a Transnational Context**; and **WGS 390: Women Across Cultures: The United Nations and the Women's Movement**.

*All of my courses incorporate a variety of interdisciplinary theory like cultural studies and feminist analysis. This is sort of the advantage of not being disciplinary anymore. I try to bring all of those perspectives. I feel like I am a cheerleader for ideas. I love to teach. I love my students. I remember my own awakening to the intellectual project. I remember the moment when I began to take my own ideas seriously. The intellectual life is a wonderful arena to think about the world and your place in it. I love bringing that world to students. Specifically, I really enjoy the*

*introductory classes in the Liberal Studies Program because I feel like that is a place where I can actually see students grapple with ideas that they have never encountered and might have even denigrated.*

She also participates in the First Year Study Abroad, taking students to Ireland and Morocco.

*The head of study abroad started a new program for first years, whose goal was to bring underrepresented students into Study Abroad. Most study abroad students, statistically, are white women. This program was meant to broaden this experience. I had already taken students to Morocco for six years, and now I have taken students to Ireland, Scotland, and Vietnam. I am very interested in travel literature, especially considering the ways in which the theory of travel literature aligns with access of "the Other." This started with my interest in language, the use of language, and philosophical arguments presented by Edward Said's [who was a professor of literature and a founder of the academic field of post-colonial studies] seminal text *Orientalism*.*

As Associate Vice President of the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, Barbara is currently working with on one of their new programs BUILD, a professional development diversity certificate available to all DePaul University faculty and staff.

*We are under the tyranny of the immediate, and it is not allowing for any thought or analysis. These moments need to be interrogated and American Studies is the place for that.*



**Barbara Schaffer , continued**

(Barbara on a Study Abroad trip in Ireland)



(Barbara presenting BUILD Certificates at the Tenth Annual President's Diversity Council Reception in 2016)

BUILD stands for: Building multicultural competencies, understanding differences and how they impact the workplace, Inclusive excellence, Leveraging Diversity and building Leadership capacity, and Developing measures of success. Through their programming, faculty and staff can earn certificates or simply improve their training in the areas of diversity. In addition, BUILD has a Diversity Certificate Program that is built like an academic curriculum for faculty and staff.

*So far, 800 people have taken courses and about 215 faculty and staff have gotten certificates. Qualitative information from the participants themselves in their evaluation seems to say that they appreciate the workshops. Hopefully faculty will begin to see it as part of their service. We are trying to teach them to be conscious, knowledge-based participants in the world.*

To address more recent issues facing DePaul students, the OIDE is prioritizing resources for Immigrants and Refugees. They are organizing a panel discussion, and they have a new section on their website that is designed to provide both internal and external resources for undocumented and immigrant students that may be affected by recent changes in legislation and Executive Orders. They want faculty and staff can be aware, become supporters, learn how to respond, and understand what legal resources are accessible to those affected by these orders.

With current contexts in mind, Barbara explains the importance and urgency of American Studies:

*There is so much to learn right now. I just think if you don't know where you've been, then you don't know where you're going and you don't know where you can go. I do feel that we should be contextualizing the past to understand the present. American Studies is so relevant today to understand what is going on. We are under the tyranny of the immediate, and it is not allowing for any thought or analysis. These moments need to be interrogated and American Studies is the place for that. American Studies integrates disciplines like philosophy, history, and English, so it allows for a breadth of analysis and philosophical background that can actually give meaning to history and the present.*

## Student Perspective: Noah Barth, class of 2017



*keep and preserve it. However, his ex-wife encountered a lot of the artwork and ended up destroying it. Many of the narratives surrounding this often demonized her, so I tried to avoid doing that in my work.*

Noah processed the Masters Collection according to accepted archival standards—an experience that inspired Noah's American Studies senior thesis, entitled "Artificial Collection with an Artificial Narrative: Analysis of the Steve Masters Ephemeral Collection in the Counterarchive." The thesis, supervised by **Prof. Dustin Goltz**, critiqued Noah's own methods of archival processing while volunteering at the Leather Archives:

Noah Barth, American Studies Major and Community Studies Minor, is graduating this June after having cultivated an undergraduate career rich in interdisciplinary studies and archival work. Noah was featured in the "First Year Perspectives" section of our American Studies Winter 2014 Newsletter. Since then, Noah has been busy working as an HIV Prevention Counselor at Lurie Children's Hospital, volunteering at the Leather Archives & Museum, and organizing the largest LGBT College Conference in the nation.

In Noah's sophomore year, Noah started volunteering at the Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M), an archive and museum located on the Northeast side of Chicago that "support[s] researchers and community members in accessing materials and documentation relevant to the history and culture of leather" and related lifestyles. After working for about a year and a half introducing visitors to the museum, Noah's efforts moved downstairs to the archive. This is when Noah first came across the Steve Masters collection. Masters (aka Mike Miksche) was an artist in the 50s and 60s who drew advertising and commercial artwork for American sportswear companies like McGregor Sportswear:

*Steve Masters drew physique drawings and male nude drawings for male physique magazines like Physique Pictorial and BIG Magazine. His life ended in a tragic overdose, and it is unclear whether it was intentional or not. He left behind some of his artwork, including his erotic artwork. Steve's roommate tried to send the artwork to someone who could*

*Since we do not have a lot of his artwork, we had to preserve what was left through these ephemeral items like magazines. As a consequence, the narratives that come along with these magazines are often not completely true and are actually more indicative of the contexts in which we want to read him. Therefore, it is important that we consider those contexts as well as the contexts of the Leather Archives where the collection is held, when trying to identify who he was or what he did. I got to critique my own methods and biases in this paper which was very difficult and confusing at times but ultimately I think it made me a better researcher.*

Through some of Noah's other coursework, like **SOC 310: Critical Perspectives on Criminal Justice** with **Dr. Tracy Schlessinger**, Noah also became interested in learning about the criminal justice system, especially considering the ways in which queer people and people with HIV are criminalized justice system. Noah noted that "[What] I was learning in class was even more interesting because I do that work as an actual job." After some time volunteering at Lurie

Children's Hospital, Lurie hired and enrolled Noah in the City of Chicago's HIV Training Cohort to become an HIV Prevention Counselor.

In addition to work at the Leather Archives and as an HIV Prevention Counselor, for two years Noah also has served as an Illinois Oversight Committee Representative for Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC), the largest LGBT College Conference in the nation. In fact, Noah was this year's conference chair.

The conference this year, titled "United in Solidarity," was held on February 17-19<sup>th</sup> at Navy Pier and drew upwards of 2,100 students to unite students from across Chicago, the Midwest, and the nation as we stand in solidarity with one another and celebrate in our own and in each other's identities. The keynotes for the conference included **Patrisse Cullors** from Black Lives Matter, **Jennicet Gutierrez** from Familia Trans Queer Liberation Movement, and **Peter Staley** from ACT UP New York.

On a more local level, at Depaul Noah worked with Act Out DePaul and was President for two years. Act Out hosts weekly or biweekly workshops and organizes tours to museums like the Leather Archives & Museum or an LGBT specific tour of the Art Institute. Act Out is



(Noah working at the Leather Archives & Museum)



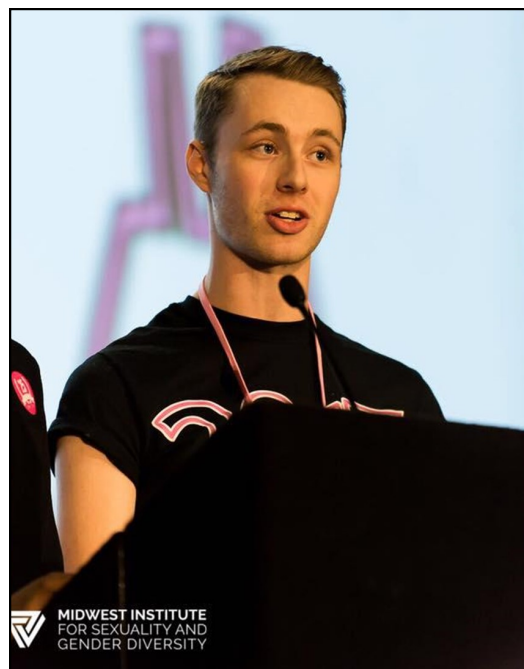
Noah Barth, *continued*

known for hosting DePaul's Student Drag Show and the Professional Drag Show.

In addition to archival, volunteer, and community work, Noah participated in a number of American Studies courses. Some favorites include MCS 351/AMS 395: American TV Comedy: Sitcom, Satire, Sketch with **Dr. Kelli Marshall**; MCS 353/ENG 386: Monsters in Popular Culture with **Dr. Paul Booth**; and AMS 276: History of Sex in America: Late Victorians to Present with **Dr. Allison McCracken**. This quarter, Noah took AMS 395: Document Ancestry/Identities with **Dr. Kelli Marshall**. In Marshall's course, students looked at television shows like *Who do you Think You Are?*, *Finding Your Roots*, and *Roots*. The class also pieced together some of their own genealogies using ancestry.com. As an American Studies major, Noah has fostered a strong appreciation for reading textual media and media as text through courses like these.

*When you look at a piece of film or television, they present a nuanced piece of material. Unlike the news for instance, that falsely claims to be purely objective, a piece of television can be nearly universal for some people. In analyzing it, you can come to understand the aspects of it that reveal what certain demographics like about it or what they get out of it. I also don't want to just relegate popular culture to just television or film because my work with physique magazines or LIFE magazine, I love print culture in general. It's really interesting to see gems of queer people hidden in not-so-obvious-places.*

In looking toward the future, Noah applied to graduate programs in History and American Studies, and is planning to attend the University of Minnesota for a brand new program: an MA in Heritage Studies



(Noah presenting at the MBLGTACC)

and Public History. This program is a two-year program involving a partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society and three paid internships.

*I first chose this program because of its intimate connections with experiential learning (through the Minnesota Historical Society). I feel this experiential aspect has been so formative for me here in Chicago and at DePaul that I could not ignore such an amazing partnership and opportunity elsewhere. Additionally, the work of the faculty there like **Dr. Kevin Murphy** really resonates with me, so I am excited to be able to work with him and other faculty members. And finally, I think the fact that this program is brand new is quite exciting. It will give me, as a student, an opportunity to help shape the program and ensure LGBTQ people always have a voice in heritage studies (and that their places of memory are included in said studies).*

As Noah reflects on their\* time as an American Studies major, they are proud of the opportunities afforded by the program [\*Note: Noah requested gender-neutral pronouns be used in this article]:

*American Studies is the place to do creative research. I remember feeling very constricted in my choices before doing American Studies at DePaul. American Studies opened so many possibilities for me. Once I started doing independent research, even within the confines of a class that presented a specific topic, there were so many possibilities for that research. It allows for a lot of room for exploration and creativity and I think that is unique to American Studies.*

## Alumni Profile: Brittany Hubbard



**Alumna, Brittany Hubbard,  
Class of 2010**

DePaul alumna Brittany Hubbard graduated from DePaul in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and an Art History minor. She is originally from St. Louis but has enjoyed living in Chicago given her love of music, arts, performance, and local communities. Her senior thesis, for which she was awarded the **Richard de Cordova Memorial Scholarship in American Studies** was titled: "Try a Little Tenderness: Otis Redding and the Cultural Appropriation of Soul," supervised by **Prof. Amy Tyson**. In this essay, Brittany examined the cultural appropriation of soul music in film from the late 80s and early 90s.

*I started noticing his music was always used in films about white people, by white people, and for white people. I wanted to examine why his music, music by a black man for black people, was used in specific moments or films and to understand what that all meant. I found that his music was used most often when a character felt like an "outsider" and transitions into becoming something different.*

After graduation, Brittany started working at Groupon, an e-commerce

marketplace where subscribers can connect with companies worldwide through special offers, coupons, and sales. When she started working there, Groupon was still a start-up company.

*When I started working there at Groupon there were no managers. Everyone was on an equal footing and it was all still in one office on one floor and it just exploded from there. It was interesting to be able to witness that and be a part of it. But then the whole culture of working there changed.*

She worked as a Voice Team Representative drafting, organizing, and maintaining email templates for the Customer Service Team. She also collaborated with the Legal Department to edit the online Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, and FAQ. She feels that her degree in American Studies helped her develop important skills that allowed her to thrive in this space.

*I worked with people from all different backgrounds and writing language for customers from different backgrounds. Everyone is buying internet coupons. I learned how to write well, edit well, and talk to people. I also learned how to have empathy and understanding what the person is going through, why they are contacting us, and how can we make it better to protect the interests of the company and do our best for the people that are buying the product.*

After graduating from DePaul, Brittany had originally thought about going to law school and had studied for the LSAT, but she wanted to take some time away from school to build a life in Chicago. While she was working with certain departments, she found herself

continually questioning the ways in which they would reference the word "legal" and her interest in law school grew once again.

Brittany started at the Chicago-Kent College of Law in August of 2013 and passed the Bar Exam in July of 2016. During her time at Chicago-Kent, she worked in an externship with Mintel Ltd., a marketing intelligence agency, where she drafted contracts, integrated revisions, and finalized executed legal documents for customers. She also held legal internships at the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism and the Law Offices of Chicago-Kent.

In addition, Brittany won several CALI Excellence for the Future Awards, an award presented to students who earn the highest grade in each class each semester. Those classes were "Law, Literature, & Feminism;" "Informing the Public: Supreme Court Practicum;" "Music Law;" and "Intellectual Property & Technology Transactions" where she started exploring her current legal interests.

Brittany worked part time at a property tax firm, Sarnoff & Baccash, after finishing at Chicago-Kent and while she was waiting for her Bar results. Noticing a huge need for lawyers and transactional business needs amongst artists, Brittany founded her own practice called Bright Lights Legal: <http://brightlightslegal.com/>.

*I looked at all of my friends here in the city and a lot of them are artists and working artists. They have all sorts of business needs and legal questions, but they don't know how to tackle legal issues like how to hire a business manager or an agent, read over a contract,*





(Jon Cryer singing "Try a Little Tenderness" from *Pretty in Pink*)

*I feel very well-rounded because of American Studies. I think I have a good understanding of our culture. It made me a better writer. It instilled a strong sense of justice in me insofar as I have a better sense of what is right, what is wrong, what could be better, and what we can do to make changes.*

register as an LLC, or address tax questions. I saw all of these things as I was in law school and want to apply them to a group of people who, for the most part, have their needs unmet. I am looking for ways to outsource those costs and keep costs low to artists and still represent them on the ground.

Brittany offers her clients the following services: Contract drafting, review, and negotiation; general business management matters; copyright and trademark registration; licensing, rights clearance and fair use; entity formation and tax liability status; rights of privacy and publicity; and inter-group conflict resolution.

Basically, regardless of the craft you are working on, when you get to the point where it becomes more than a hobby, and you want to start making money off of it and want to protect yourself as a business, that's where I come in. I am not a litigator. I don't go to court. I do everything on pen and paper.

She received her license in October and has since worked with a number of clients including the Peanut Gallery in Humboldt Park, an artist-run exhibition and studio space in Humboldt Park, Chicago, specializing in showing ambitious new work by local emerging artists and connecting people with one another through workshops, screenings, artist talks and forums. She has also worked with a photographer who needed a wedding photography contract, a book publisher, and is looking to work with a local band that wants to register as an LLC (limited liability company).

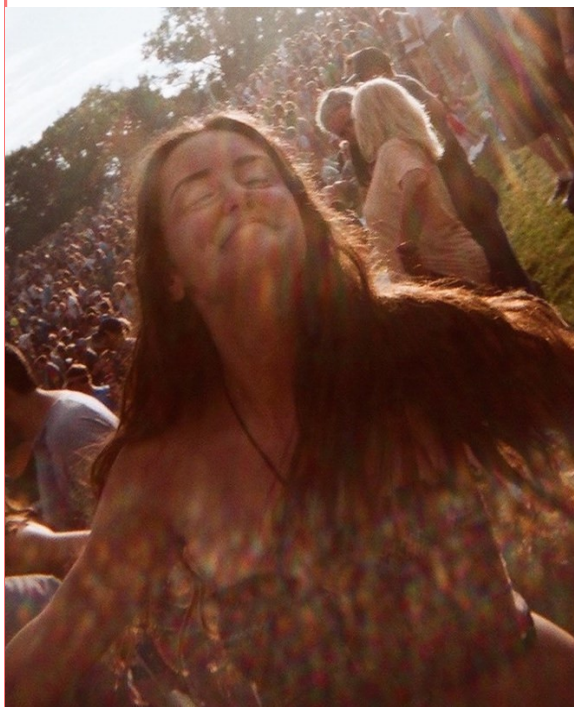
I would hope to write programs and develop resources so that artists could solve these problems on their own. Eventually, they would not need to hire a lawyer. Long term, I'm trying to eliminate the need for a lawyer. I don't like the idea of people being pushed around. I think that happens often to groups of people that are undervalued or have trouble valuing themselves and their work. I want to do anything I can do to empower them.

Brittany feels that her training in American Studies motivated her to engage with underserved communities and gave her the skills to succeed in Law school:

*I feel very well-rounded because of American Studies. I think I have a good understanding of our culture. It made me a better writer. It instilled a strong sense of justice in me insofar as I have a better sense of what is right, what is wrong, what could be better, and what we can do to make changes. I especially think it helped me gain a strong sense of history. It is important to focus on what happens within the country to see how we fall into certain historical patterns, how these patterns repeat themselves, and how can we avoid them. American Studies is everything and its whatever you want it to be. AMS gives you the freedom to explore your interests. Instead of spending half of your time in undergraduate school taking classes in something you may not end up pursuing.*

## Meet the New American Studies Student Assistant, Amy Hildebrand

*Amy is a junior in American Studies with a concentration in Politics, Institutions and Values.*



[In response to questions posed by Cindy Ramos] I love everything about majoring in AMS! Our class discussions are unparalleled. We have open and honest dialogue about the content we are covering. I love to dive into the culture and lived experience of people of history which is the core of AMS work. I love the intimacy of our growing major, I love the professors and the companionship my fellow students provide. I have found a home in American Studies. My major interest is in drug policy and culture. I love learning about the fight for feminism and other impactful, turbulent periods of social growth - anything from the Civil War to the hippie movement.

Some of my favorite courses so far have been Mass Incarceration and Public Memory with **Amy Tyson**, and Politics and History of the Vietnam War with **James Brask**. I also adored all of my core AMS classes, where I believe I learned the most and had the most fruitful class discussions.

This year, I've been reading *The Crystal Tarot* which is not really a book, more so the guide associated with my tarot card deck!

I am really looking forward to helping the AMS department recruit new students. We are a hidden gem that so many more students deserve to experience.

## Meet the New American Studies Program Assistant, Alicia Sanders

[In response to questions posed by Cindy Ramos] I started with DePaul at DePaul Central in July of '14. I worked in the Calling Center answering questions regarding financial aid, student accounts, and students records. I talked with students and parents, faculty and staff, and outside inquires through phones, emails, and live chat. I really liked it and miss my friends; however, I soon found myself interested in the more academic side of DePaul rather than the business side. In saying that; I am working on my M.Ed. in Counseling, particularly the College Student Development track. My future goals include working at DePaul in a more admissions, advising, and or retention capacity. I'm going part-time, and am looking to graduate in spring of 2020.

I feel very fortunate to be working here in the American Studies Program. Along with AMS, I am the department assistant for Public Policy Studies. Everybody has been incredibly welcoming and kind. And I have enjoyed getting to know both departments. I'm exposed to more students and faculty by being involved in both ASM and PPS. Most of the work and skills between the two academic programs are transferable, especially when it comes to DePaul practices. Because I came from DePaul Central, I already knew so much about DePaul and the universities' interfaces that my training for the position was incredibly seamless. There have been challenges to the job, but for the most part, I have been able to learn on the go and get things done.

I read a lot. Recently some of the books that come to mind are: *Hillbilly Elegy* by J. D. Vance, *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren, and *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea. All of them were (are) very interesting. I felt that *Hillbilly Elegy* was a little like having a one sided conversation without getting all your questions answered. *Lab Girl* was so clever and very well written. I learned a lot about horticulture and being a research professor. And *The Devil's Highway* has been harrowing so far. I also read my fair bit of fiction for entertainment.



(Alicia—center—with her husband and three boys)