Laura Tach
Laura Tach is a second-year assistant professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management. Her research examines economic inequality and family life, with a focus on how family dynamics reproduce economic inequality in American society. Funding from the Affinito-Stewart Grants Program has allowed Laura to launch a project on the changing economic costs of romantic union dissolution for women and children. Changes over the past fifty years in maternal labor force participation, government programs, and private social networks may have altered the economic impact of marital and cohabitation dissolution, which has important implications for maternal and child well-being. Using nationally representative, longitudinal survey data, Laura has found that the economic consequences of divorce for married women and children have declined since the 1980s, due to the growth in married women’s earnings and receipt of child support and income from personal networks. In contrast, the economic consequences of cohabitation dissolution were modest in the 1980s but have worsened over time. Childbearing within cohabitation also became more common over this time period. Together, these trends have contributed to rising income instability for less-advantaged children and to the diverging fortunes of children born within and outside of marriage. Laura has used funds from this grant to hire and mentor Alicia Eads, a PhD student in sociology. Together, they have presented this work at Cornell’s Center for the Study of Inequality, the University of Wisconsin’s Institute for Research on Poverty, and the annual meetings of the Population Association of America and the American Sociological Association. They are currently working on two related projects, one that examines how relationship instability influences women’s wealth accumulation (such as assets, debts, and net worth), and one that examines how women adjust their labor supply in response to relationship dissolution. Laura is grateful for the support provided by this program!

Lori Khatchadourian
I regret that I could not be with you this evening [Dinner with Affinito-Stewart Grants Recipients, PCCW Annual Meeting, 3/1/14] to extend my sincere thanks for the PCCW Affinito-Stewart Grant. With your support, in the summer of 2013 I continued an ongoing program of archaeological research in the Republic of Armenia. As an archaeologist, my work centers firmly on the relationship between humans and their things. More specifically, I study the link between the phenomenon of imperialism and the vast world of material objects that surrounds those caught up in imperial snares. I explore this relationship between power and objects through the historical case study of the ancient Persian Empire, which ruled much of the Near East during the middle of the first millennium B.C. In Armenia, I have been excavating a remote settlement nestled in the mountains, once an ordinary town of the Persian Empire. My goal has been to understand how people living in this distant corner of the Persian realm participated in the imperial project through the creation, use, and modification of objects—from wine jars and bowls to jewelry and ritual paraphernalia. I am particularly interested in how these objects themselves had certain capacities to shape human relations, quite apart from the intentions of their human makers. These themes take center stage in a book manuscript that I am now completing. The insights I have gained from my research on ancient Persia and Armenia form the basis for a broader framework for the archaeological study of empires across time and space.