

Message from the Managing Director

The Justice Center continues to pursue work on many important and interesting projects, some of which are updated in this issue of The Docket. For example, the Justice Center has recently released a new and improved website that provides much more information on all of the projects underway within the Center, which is an important part of our outreach efforts.

PENN STATE JUSTICE CENTER FOR RESEARCH

Doris L. MacKenzie, Director
Gary Zajac, Managing Director

Also in terms of dissemination and outreach, Doris recently spoke at the Stockholm Criminology Symposium about the work we are doing on the national HOPE evaluation. The paper she and I did for the National Academy of Science was also accepted on first submission and we're told had a real impact on the deliberations of the committee that requested it. Of course, we also continue to seek new grant support for projects under development. There are too many good things underway for me to summarize here, so please read on below!

Dr. Gary Zajac

NAS Paper Update

Doris MacKenzie and Gary Zajac's summary of the literature entitled: "What Works in Corrections: The Impact of Correctional Interventions on Recidivism" for the National Academies of Science was recently accepted on its first submission. Their paper has been used to inform the deliberations of the NAS Committee on the Causes and Consequences of High Rates of Incarceration as they prepare policy recommendations.

In the upcoming months, the Justice Center will be building on this completed project by pursuing a more inclusive look at "What Works in Corrections." As additional sections about electronic monitoring and mental health are being written, the Justice Center is working to secure a publishing contract for a book to be written from this material.

Director Doris MacKenzie: Keynote Speaker at Stockholm Criminology Symposium

Justice Center Director, Doris MacKenzie, was a keynote speaker at the Stockholm Criminology Symposium in June. Her presentation entitled, "The Human Experiment in Treatment: A Means to the End of Offender Recidivism," was delivered to an international audience of experts in the field of criminology. You can view her keynote presentation here: <http://tinyurl.com/keynotestockholm>

Professor MacKenzie also gave a presentation on the HOPE probation study with colleague Pam Lattimore of RTI. This international conference serves as a platform for criminologists, policy makers, and practitioners to share the latest research findings to improve policies and practices.

Dr. Ian Elliott Contributes to PCAR Blog & Twitter Chat

Justice Center Research Scholar, Dr. Ian Elliott, recently wrote a blog for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)'s guest blog series for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. In his blog, Dr. Elliott discusses the concept of "grooming" and how it can be used in various contexts to describe how people create certain environments and relationships that enable them to achieve their goals. In the context of preventing sexual abuse, Dr. Elliott says that the public needs to be more vigilant in terms of recognizing potential grooming behaviors such as targeting of vulnerable individuals, rapport-building, and coercion. Dr. Elliott's blog can be found here: <http://www.pcar.org/blog/grooming-concept-grooming>

PCAR also featured Dr. Elliott in one of their Tuesday twitter chats during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. On April 23rd, Dr. Elliott participated in a twitter discussion about sex offender behavior and prevention methods. A transcript from the chat can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/cez85j3>

Campus Sexual Assault Education Conference

Research Assistant Courtney Meyer is organizing a one-day conference to educate college students about sexual assault with a unique focus on masculinity and rape. The conference will take place at Penn State's HUB-Robeson Center on October 15, 2013. It will be free and available for students to register. In addition to a well-known speaker, there will be a variety of one-hour workshops for students to choose from. So far, \$16,500 in funding has been secured from a variety of sponsors including PCAR, Penn State's SSRI, Penn State Student Affairs, and the Centre County Women's Resource Center. The next step for Courtney in the planning process is advertising the event to students. She hopes to specifically target first-year students when they arrive at Penn State for the fall semester by distributing flyers in the dorms and other popular locations on campus.

Justice Center Launches New Website

In early June, the Justice Center launched its newly re-designed website. New content includes a section for faculty resources, a section for upcoming events, and a research page which details all of the Justice Center's active funded projects, completed projects, and initiatives. We hope that our updated website will serve as a valuable tool to inform the university and the public of the work we do at the Justice Center.

Please visit our new website to see all of our changes!

www.justicecenter.psu.edu

Mifflin County Adult Treatment Court Evaluation

In early July, Dr. Gary Zajac and Laura Winger will travel to the Mifflin County Adult Treatment Court in Lewistown, PA to conduct an evaluation of the drug court program. They will interview several key staff members to learn more about the treatment practices being utilized in the program. This evaluation will help determine whether the drug court is using best practices in corrections. A final report will summarize the findings and offer suggestions for program improvement.

PA Senate Resolution 6 – Capital Punishment

Dr. Gary Zajac and Dr. John Kramer of the department of Sociology and Criminology paid a visit to Senator Greenleaf at the state capital on April 30th to provide an update on the research agenda on capital punishment. One aspect of this project involves a survey of victims, inmate families, and correctional staff regarding secondary trauma resulting from capital sentencing. Dr. Derek Kreager of the department of Sociology and Criminology and Dr. Zajac have drafted the surveys and recently submitted them to the IRB. For the ongoing portion of the project that's examining racial disparity in death penalty sentencing, the research team plans to do additional field data collection this summer. Robert Hutchison, a graduate student in Sociology and Criminology, will serve as the graduate assistant for this project during the coming academic year.

Grant Submissions

- BJA Smart Probation – Drs. Zajac, DeMichele, & MacKenzie propose a randomized control trial (RCT) study of 1500 high-risk, high-need offenders to determine whether a specific treatment curriculum impacts recidivism.
- NIJ Violence Against Women – Courtney Meyer and Dr. John Kramer (Sociology & Criminology) propose to examine and evaluate the response of public high schools in PA to victims of sexual assault.
- NIJ Home Visits – Drs. Zajac, DeMichele, and MacKenzie have applied for funding to conduct an RCT of the impact of probation officer home visits on moderate and high risk caseloads within Rhode Island.

Justice Center for Research

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