

*Message from the Director*

**PENN STATE**  
*CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CENTER*

Derek Kreager, Director  
Gary Zajac, Managing Director  
Elaine Arsenault, Docket Editor

*Dear Friends of the CJRC,*

*I hope you all are well and staying safe in these extremely challenging and uncertain times.*

*The concurrent COVID-19 and racial justice crises hit the Center and University hard. We are adapting to these challenges and continue to fulfill our outreach and research missions. I personally want to thank our administrative and research staff who keep our activities alive and have created a structure for increased future support. We're learning how to move our research and community activities online, permitting us to move forward and reach an even broader and more dispersed audience. Using virtual platforms, we will recruit study participants, host external speakers, and plan an undergraduate career fair this Fall. As you'll see below, we have A LOT going on and look forward to another great year of accomplishments and growth. Thank you for your support and stay tuned at <http://justicecenter.psu.edu> for more to come!*



*Derek Kreager*  
*CJRC Director*

**Message from the Director on Ongoing Crises (*posted online June 5, 2020*)**

The tragic killing of George Floyd and the clear racial disparities in COVID-19 deaths have, once again, laid bare the deep-rooted social inequalities and injustices facing communities of color in the United States. There is hope that collective outrage and the spotlight shone on these pressing issues will result in long-needed social change. However, the risk remains that cynicism, fatalism, or political distraction will limit progress. For my part, I recommit the CJRC to its mission of supporting diverse research focused on criminal justice systems and processes. Social facts, rigorous evaluation, and the weight of evidence partner with collective action to effect policy change. I remain confident that the CJRC can continue to bring together strong researchers and the criminal justice community to facilitate a more equal and just system.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **CJRC Faculty Affiliates Recipients of 2020 American Society of Criminology Awards**

CJRC Faculty Affiliates recently received awards from the American Society of Criminology. Holly Nguyen, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Criminology, and Public Policy, was awarded the Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award. Darrell Steffensmeier, John Kramer Professor of Sociology and Criminology, and colleagues won the Joan Petersilia Outstanding Article Award for their article, "Age and its Relation to Crime in Taiwan and the United States: Invariant, or Does Cultural Context Matter." *Criminology*, Vol 55 (2): 377-404, 2017. Pam Wilcox, Professor of Sociology and Criminology, was named an American Society of Criminology Fellow. Congrats Holly, Darrell, and Pam!



*From left to right: Holly Nguyen, Darrell Steffensmeier, Pam Wilcox.*

### **Brittany Freelin Awarded 2020 CJRC Graduate Student Research Funds**

Beginning in 2018, the Criminal Justice Research Center has presented the Graduate Student Research Award. These awards are designed to assist graduate students in pursuing independent research on a project related to criminal justice, criminology, law, or a related field. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing (PCS) supports up to one graduate student award for research related to sentencing.

This year's awardee is Department of Sociology and Criminology graduate student Brittany Freelin. Brittany's proposal is entitled, "A Place-Based Intervention: The Effect of College Promise Programs on Crime Rates" and examines how college promise policies impact crime rates in communities over time. She is specifically looking at The Kalamazoo Promise, which was the first college access program of its kind to take into account the environment and place-by providing this program to all residents of Kalamazoo-rather than solely focusing on individuals. The outcome goals of this project are to determine if programs such as The Kalamazoo Promise will lead to a decrease in crime rates by increasing family and youth connection to school and educational expectations within the community. Brittany is advised on this project by Corina Graif, Associate Professor of Sociology and Criminology.

## Graduate Student Achievement Award and Volunteer of the Year awarded to Kim Davidson

CJRC NIJ Graduate Research Fellow Kim Davidson won the 2020 Graduate Student Achievement Award from the Department of Sociology and Criminology and the 2020 Volunteer of the Year award from the Pennsylvania Prison Society (PPS) – Centre County Chapter. Kim has been volunteering with the Centre County chapter of PPS for about three years as an Official Visitor at the Centre County Correctional Facility (CCCF). Men and women at CCCF put in requests to speak with Official Visitors about various issues and the Official Visitors advocate for their needs and resolve those issues. Each year, each county chapter nominates someone from their chapter as their Volunteer of the Year. Congrats Kim!



### The Criminal Justice Research Center

#### Criminology Forum

welcomes



Alan Lizotte, Ph.D.  
Distinguished Professor  
School of Criminal Justice  
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy  
University of Albany – SUNY  
CJRC Visiting Research Fellow – Penn State University

### **“Longitudinal Data And Their Uses: A Discussion Of The Rochester Youth Development Study”**

Alan Lizotte’s research interests include guns and gun control, the correlates and causes of juvenile delinquency over the life course, and policy health issues for clients of the criminal justice system. He is co-principal investigator on the Rochester Youth Development Study (RYDS). In 2003, he and his RYDS colleagues won the American Society of Criminology’s Hindelang Award for the Most Outstanding Contribution to Research in Criminology.

Thursday, September 24  
Zoom Link: <https://psu.zoom.us/j/95940092321>  
12:00 – 1:00 PM

**This event is co-sponsored by the Criminal Justice Research Center and the Department of Sociology and Criminology.**

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## Criminal Justice Research Center Welcomes New Personnel

The CJRC is very excited to welcome [Megan Kurlychek](#), [Michael LaForest](#), and [Emerson Waite](#) to the Criminal Justice Research Center.

**Megan Kurlychek** is a Professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Penn State University. She also has a joint time appointment in the School of Public Policy and serves as Associate Director of the Criminal Justice Research Center. Megan's research interests surround the impact of criminal justice system involvement on later life outcomes with a particular focus on juvenile justice, sentencing, disparities and the collateral consequences of a criminal record on employment and education. Megan is an Alum of Penn State holding a B.A. in Sociology (1991) and a Ph.D. in Crime, Law and Justice (2004) from the University. Prior to her current position, Megan has worked at the Pennsylvania State Senate, the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the University of South Carolina and the University at Albany where she also served as Executive Director of the Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center, Executive Director of the New York State Youth Justice Institute and Editor of Justice Quarterly.

**Michael LaForest** is a post-doctoral scholar in the Criminal Justice Research Center. In this role, he works closely with the Bureau of Planning, Research & Statistics at the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and his position is fully funded by the PADOC in partnership with the CJRC. Michael's research focuses on ways to improve criminal justice and education policy and outcomes. It includes experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of criminal justice and education programs, including evaluations of re-entry forums for recently paroled individuals who had committed a violent crime with a gun, an initiative to reduce anonymity between police officers and neighborhood residents via mailers and in-person outreach, and an individualized math tutoring program for ninth-graders below grade-level. His research uses both structural and non-structural estimation techniques. Michael holds a PhD in economics from the University of Virginia and a BS in economics & political science from the University of Michigan. Prior to this position, Michael worked as a research director at Crime & Education Lab New York, managing a combination of policy evaluations and technical assistance projects for several New York City government agencies.

**Emerson Waite** is a graduate student in the Department of Criminology at Penn State University. Emerson's assistantship is being funded by the PA Commission on Sentencing, and he will work closely with them this year. His research interests include sentencing, corrections, and prisoner reentry, as well as public policy. Emerson is a native Pennsylvanian, and earned his B.A. in Sociology from Susquehanna University. While a student, Emerson interned for the District Attorney of Snyder County where he assisted in DUI data collection and first learned about DUI Courts and other types of rehabilitative justice. Following graduation, Emerson was a Deputy Clerk of Courts for Chester County, where he became a sworn official of the court and spent his days in the front of courtrooms. He assisted criminal judges in managing their dockets by curating official case files, issuing the oath for sworn testimony, collecting evidence, and completing sentencing forms as judges would verbally enter final dispositions onto the official record. Before returning to school, Emerson lived and worked in Washington, D.C. where his passion for public policy crossed into his interest with criminal justice institutions and the inequality that is enshrined within them.



*From left to right: Megan Kurlychek, Michael LaForest and Emerson Waite.*

## Criminal Justice Research Center Welcomes New Faculty Affiliates

The CJRC is very excited to welcome [Abenaa Jones](#) and [Jacob Schuman](#) as faculty affiliates.

**Abenaa Jones**, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, work addresses the syndemic of substance use disorders, violence, sexual risk behaviors, and HIV/STIs, as well as evaluation of structural and behavioral interventions aimed at reducing substance use and associated harms.

**Jacob Schuman**, Assistant Professor of Law, studies criminal law, criminal procedure, and sentencing. Prior to joining Penn State, Professor Schuman worked in the appellate unit of the Federal Community Defender Office in Philadelphia, where he represented indigent criminal defendants before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He also practiced white collar criminal defense as an associate at Zuckerman Spaeder LLP in Washington, D.C. After graduating magna cum laude from Harvard Law School, he clerked for the Honorable Michael Boudin on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the Honorable James Boasberg on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He served as Notes Chair of the Harvard Law Review.



*From left to right: Abenaa Jones and Jacob Schuman.*

## Criminal Justice Research Center Departure

Lindsay Bostwick leaves the CJRC after working as a post-doctoral scholar with the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing for a year. Good luck in the future, Lindsay!

Jonathan Dirlam has been a postdoctoral scholar at the CJRC for the past two years, we wish him much luck in his new position as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at The State University of New York at Albany!



*From left to right: Lindsay Bostwick and Jonathan Dirlam.*

## **OUTREACH AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

Hello from Outreach and Enrichment! We hope this finds everyone healthy and doing well. As it has been for everyone, spring and summer semesters were a new challenge but we've adjusted to the changes pretty well!

Though the switch to remote working and learning has certainly impacted several aspects of our programming, things are once again moving forward as we navigate new formats to reach our students.

In May, we worked closely with the Department of Sociology and Criminology staff to spearhead a live virtual graduation ceremony. In addition to an appearance by Department Head Eric Baumer, we also had multiple faculty members and two of our past distinguished alumni awardees speak as well as the College of Liberal Arts student marshal, Awaly Diallo, who is a SOC/CRIM graduate! We recorded over 100 individual logins which we extrapolated out to be approximately 250 attendees or so, which we think is fantastic!

In July, we were one of the first units in the college to host a virtual student-alumni networking session. Though small, the event was successful and the students and alumni who participated were pleased with the experience. We will be hosting another similar event in early November. We are hoping to connect even more students and alumni to discuss career options and advice in our next event.

We are also still planning to hold our successful Career Expo in the fall on Oct. 27 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Unfortunately, regulations are preventing us from holding it in person so we will be tackling a larger-scale virtual event! Though this will be a learning experience for us all, it will open the door for future virtual events to hold alongside our in person ones! We look forward to inviting back those who participated last year and are excited to grow and welcome new participants! Please refer anyone you think might be interested to me at [rer201@gmail.com](mailto:rer201@gmail.com).

Hope everyone has a great semester and we look forward to updating you about some of our new modes of outreach in the coming months!

**Rebecca Reitz, CJRC Outreach and Enrichment Coordinator**

## **CAMPUS CONNECTIONS**

In Summer 2019, the Commonwealth Campus Center Nodes (C3N) initiative engaged faculty from across Penn State who are conducting criminal justice research to create the Criminal Justice C3N (CJ C3N). The CJ C3N initiative is supported by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) which is providing \$17,000 in funding. A main goal of the broader C3N program is to foster faculty relationships across Penn State in support of Commonwealth Campus faculty research activities by increasing Commonwealth Campus faculty connections with research resources available at UP.

Faculty from Abington, Altoona, Behrend, Berks, Greater Allegheny, Harrisburg, and University Park held multiple discussions over the 2019-2020 AY to determine the structure of Criminal Justice C3N and how to bring together faculty interested in collaborative research. It was determined that the CJ C3N would serve to connect with Commonwealth Campus faculty and encourage cross-campus research partnerships while also acting as a consortium for sharing research ideas and content expertise. To meet the goal of connecting Commonwealth Campus faculty with research resources at UP, the CJ C3N has partnered with the Criminal Justice Research Center.

During inaugural discussions the group decided to host an annual mini-conference which would provide CJ C3N faculty members an opportunity to network and forge relationships to support cross-campus research projects. Due to Covid-19, the CJ C3N held its first meeting via Zoom on May 6, 2020 in lieu of the originally scheduled day-long mini-conference at the Harrisburg Campus. The CJ C3N is open to all Penn State faculty with an interest in conducting research related to criminal justice.

### **New Commonwealth Campus Center Nodes Funded Projects**

The following are new projects under the Commonwealth Campus Center Nodes (C3N) initiative:

**Correctional Officer Health and Networks Study (COHNS)**, Faculty Investigators: Derek Kreager (PI), Jeff Ulmer, Gary Zajac, Lecinda Yevchak (University Park). This study will take a systems approach to understand correctional officer health in two PA prisons. Network data on CO friendships will be collected to understand the CO informal structure and social integration. This information will be correlated with health information, supervisor perceptions, family situations, and prisoner interactions from self-report surveys. A follow-on online survey will be administered to COs across the Commonwealth to understand how health-related outcomes vary by prison setting.

**Inner-City (Im)Mobility: How Residents Cope with Community Violence When Moving is Not an Option**, Faculty Investigator: Eileen M. Ahlin (Harrisburg). This project examines why inner-city residents remain in communities plagued by violence, risking further exposure to violence and its consequences, while also evaluating resident and neighborhood agency and processes of social control. The project will focus on understanding risk and protective factors contributing to decisions to stay in communities with high violent crime rates, risks they face, and how they cope with violence.

**Exploring Professional Experiences Among LGBTQ+ Identified Individuals within Criminal Justice Professions** Faculty Investigators: Glenn Sterner and Tom Wines (Abington). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) perspectives within the United States are highly underrepresented in criminal justice literature. Our primary emphasis within this project is to highlight the experiences of LGBTQ professionals within our criminal justice system. In addition to the need for research on this subject matter, there are no available undergraduate courses that pointedly examine the intersection of LGBTQ identities and the criminal justice system currently offered at Penn State Abington nor within the broader Penn State System. We hope to empower LGBTQ students to examine this career pathway, while expanding all students' knowledge on criminal justice and LGBTQ interactions. The first goal of this project is to add to the criminal justice literature by examining LGBT experiences through a qualitative study. The second objective of this project is to develop a course proposal for a special topics course on LGBTQ perspectives in criminal justice for offering in Spring Semester of 2021.

## **CORRECTIONS AND RE-ENTRY**

### **“Collecting Social Network Data in Prison and During Re-Entry: A Field Guide” Article Published**

A new book titled *Moving Beyond Recidivism: Expanding Approaches to Research on Prisoner Reentry and Reintegration* features article on [“Collecting Social Network Data in Prison and During Re-Entry: A Field Guide.”](#) The article discusses collecting prison network data and the authors include Corey Whichard, CJRC Graduate Student Alumni now an Assistant Professor at SUNY Albany, Sara Wakefield, Associate Professor at Rutgers University, and Derek Kreager, CJRC Director. This article stems from the Prison Inmate Network Studies (PINS) portfolio that has been a major project for the CJRC over the past six years. All co-authors were part of the PINS projects.

### **“Incarcerated Fathers’ Experiences in the Read to Your Child/Grandchild Program: Supporting Children’s Literacy, Learning, and Education” Article Published**

Esther Prins, Professor of Education, and colleagues Tabitha Stickel, Ph.D. candidate, and Anna Kaiper-Marquez, Assistant Teaching Professor, published a paper on "Incarcerated Fathers’ Experiences in the Read to Your Child/Grandchild Program: Supporting Children’s Literacy, Learning, and Education" in the *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*. The Criminal Justice Research Center supported part of this work through a 2018 seed grant award for the “Read to Your Child/Grandchild: Family Literacy for Incarcerated Parents in Pennsylvania” project. Read the article [here](#).

### **Replicating PINS in Dutch prisons, “Social Organization in Prison: A Social Network Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships Among Dutch Prisoners” Published in Justice Quarterly**

The article [“Social Organization in Prison: A Social Network Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships among Dutch prisoners”](#) was recently published in *Justice Quarterly*. This research extends the Prison Inmate Networks Study (PINS) framework to the Netherlands. Center Director, Derek Kreager is a co-author with Miranda Sentse, Anouk Bosma, Paul Nieuwebeerta, and Hanneke Palmen.

### **Article on HOPE Field Experiences Published in the *Journal of Crime and Justice***

A recent article in the *Journal of Crime and Justice* titled [“The Implementation of the Honest Opportunity Probation with Enforcement Demonstration Field Experiment: Experiences from the Field”](#) details the implementation experience of the HOPE model at 4 sites across the country and examines the local contexts the model was introduced to. The article is by Gary Zajac, Center Managing Director, Debbie Dawes, RTI, International and Elaine Arsenault, Center Researcher.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND TREATMENT**

### **CJRC Researchers Discuss Impacts of COVID-19 on Criminal Justice System and Individuals Affected by Substance Use Disorder**

Penn State's Social Science Research Institute Insight from Experts page features two timely articles by Center researchers. Gary Zajac, Center Managing Director, Derek Kreager, Center Director, and Glenn Sterner, PSU Abington Faculty Affiliate, discuss the "[Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Criminal Justice System](#)," in their article. An additional article titled "[COVID-19: Implications and Opportunities for Substance Use Disorder](#)" by Glenn Sterner examines the effects of the pandemic on those affected by substance use.

### **New article by PA Commission on Sentencing Graduate Student Kim Davidson in Criminal Justice and Behavior**

CJRC NIJ Graduate Research Fellow Kim Davidson recently published an article in *Criminal Justice and Behavior* on "[Testing an Interactionist Theory of Treatment Engagement in a Pennsylvania Prison-Based Therapeutic Community](#)." This work stems from Kim's thesis on peer interactions in Therapeutic Communities.

### **Glenn Sterner presents at the Topics in Addiction Seminar**

Glenn Sterner, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at PSU Abington and CJRC Faculty Affiliate, presented An Examination of the Impacts of Stigma on Those with a Substance Use Disorder: Recommendations for Comprehensively Addressing This Barrier to Treatment and Recovery as part of the Topics in Addiction seminar. The presentation was in the spring at Penn State College of Medicine. The talk was recorded via Zoom at <https://psu.zoom.us/j/698471858>.

### **"New on the Block: Analyzing Network Selection Trajectories in a Prison Treatment Program" published in *American Sociological Review***

A recent article in *American Sociological Review* by David Schaefer, Associate Professor, University of California, Irvine, and Derek Kreager, Center Director, titled "[New on the Block: Analyzing Network Selection Trajectories in a Prison Treatment Program](#)" examines how network selection varies over time. This article stems from the Prison Inmate Network Studies (PINS) portfolio that has been a major project for the CJRC over the past six years. All co-authors were part of the PINS projects.

## Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse Research Working Groups Led by CJRC Faculty Affiliates

The [Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse](#) (CCSA) recently announced several new research working groups. The CJRC is connected to projects in the CCSA focused on substance use treatment and prevention and the criminal justice system, which is also one of the CJRC's four thematic areas. The following CJRC Faculty Affiliates are involved in projects: Kate McLean, Assistant Professor of Administration of Justice at PSU Greater Allegheny, Glenn Sterner, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at PSU Abington, Jennifer Murphy, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at PSU Berks, and Deirdre O'Sullivan, Associate Professor of Education, PSU University Park.

**Coalition Building in Underserved Communities in PA**, The goal of this working group, made of faculty working across various disciplines and campuses, is to develop a better understanding of the far reaching efforts of substance abuse, particularly opioid misuse, in several high need areas of PA.

This group is led by:

**Maureen Ittig**, Penn State Fayette  
**Kate McLean**, Penn State Greater Allegheny

**Stigma Reduction Coalition**, The theme of this research working group is community engagement and coalition building to build and develop a stigma reduction in PA to organize and connect three stakeholders; 1. Researchers, 2. Practitioners and community leaders, and 3. People in recovery from substance use disorder.

This group is led by:

**Glenn Sterner**, Penn State Abington  
**Jennifer Murphy**, Penn State Berks

**Development Recovery Stage Model**, The goal of this group is to further an emerging concept, the Development Recovery Stage Model, to use among different populations of people in recovery from addiction as a way to identify appropriate recovery goals as people progress through the stages of recovery.

This group is led by:

**Deirdre O'Sullivan**, Penn State University Park  
**H. Harrington (Bo) Cleveland**, Penn State University Park

## **COURTS AND SENTENCING**

### “Geographic arbitrariness? County court variation in capital prosecution and sentencing in Pennsylvania” article published

A new article was recently published in *Criminology & Public Policy* titled “[Geographic arbitrariness? County court variation in capital prosecution and sentencing in Pennsylvania.](#)” The article is published by Jeffery Ulmer, CJRC Faculty Affiliate, Gary Zajac, CJRC Managing Director, and John Kramer, CJRC Faculty Affiliate. This article reports on county-based differences in outcomes in capital case prosecution in Pennsylvania, deriving from a larger study of disparity in death sentencing conducted by the authors.

Criminal Justice Research Center

The Pennsylvania State University  
304 Oswald Tower  
University Park, PA 16802  
814-867-3292  
[www.justicecenter.la.psu.edu](http://www.justicecenter.la.psu.edu)

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