

Message from the Managing Director

This issue of the CJRC Docket provides many important updates to Center activities, including new arrivals to the Center, publications and seed funding opportunities, but the core of my Director's message focuses on a farewell and tribute to Derek Kreager.

*Derek served as Center Director from 2017 until this past June. When Derek joined us in the summer of 2017, he was already an important part of the Center, having received Center support in the development of the Prison Inmate Network Study (PINS). With Derek as Principal Investigator PINS subsequently became a key project portfolio of the Center, starting with the original PINS study (NSF funded), which then spawned the TC-PINS project (NIH funded) that focused on prison-based therapeutic communities, and finally the WO-PINS study (NIJ funded), which focused on female inmates. This large series of studies has generated nearly \$1.5 million in external funding to date. Importantly, the PINS studies have led to an extensive web of collaboration with faculty colleagues both within Penn State and at other institutions, as well as providing support and research opportunities for numerous graduate and undergraduate students at Penn State and elsewhere. PINS also built upon and expanded our existing partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC). These internal collaborations and external partnerships are key to the fulfillment of the Center's mission. The PINS portfolio has resulted in over a dozen publications to-date in high impact journals such as *Criminology* and *American Sociological Review*, with more in the pipeline. Finally, the PINS research model has now even been replicated in other countries, demonstrating the generalizability of this research far beyond Pennsylvania. Most recently, Derek, Jeff Ulmer (who will assume the Director role in January) and I have submitted a proposal to NSF to fund an extension of the PINS model to a study of Corrections Officer health and wellness in the PADOC (the "COHNS" study), which is an understudied area of corrections. We are optimistic of funding, which will allow an entirely new phase of PINS to begin next year. PINS has been a major win for the Center and will remain so even with Derek's departure as Director.*

Beyond PINS, during Derek's tenure the Center formalized and expanded its seed grant program, resulting in the award of 21 seed grants to an expanding base of Center faculty affiliates since 2017. To-date, these seed grants have returned over \$4 million in external funding and over a dozen publications. The seed grant program is another crucial element of the Center's mission. On a related point, Derek also led the development of the Criminal Justice node within the emerging Commonwealth Campus Center-Node (C3N) program that was initiated in 2019 by the Office of the Senior Vice President for Research. C3N supports research collaborations between research centers such as CJRC at University Park and faculty at the Commonwealth Campuses. To date, the CJRC-C3N node has made seven research seed grant awards to faculty at the campuses.

Derek also initiated the development and expansion of new and valuable collaborations between the CJRC and other university units, such as the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) and Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse (CCSA). In addition, Derek has worked with the Department of Sociology and Criminology to expand and reframe the formal written partnership with the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing (based at Penn State), which is a key agency partner and supporter of both the Center and the Department. The CJRC, PCS and Department collaborate to support two Postdoctoral Scholars, two graduate student assistants and several undergraduate interns on a variety of projects. Internal partnerships such as these are key to the growth of a center such as CJRC.

PENN STATE

CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CENTER

Gary Zajac, Managing Director
Megan Kurlychek, Associate Director
Elaine Arsenault, Docket Editor

Message from the Managing Director Continued

And last but by no means least, Derek led the charge to establish the Outreach and Enrichment section of the CJRC. O&E links undergraduates at Penn State to internship opportunities with faculty affiliates and agency partners and to assist students with career opportunities through a very successful annual career fair and by other means. Derek also works with the O&E coordinator Rebecca Reitz on joint opportunities between the CJRC and Department to promote Center and Department activities and to build additional avenues for collaboration and cooperation with organizations and individuals outside of the university. Outreach is another critical element for the success of the CJRC.

In closing, and on behalf of the entire CJRC and its internal and external constituencies, I want to extend our deepest appreciation and regards to Derek for his four years of service to the Center. He has made many critical contributions to the growth of the Center, which I have only briefly reviewed here, and will continue to do so going forward. On a personal level, I have greatly enjoyed working and collaborating with Derek, both on Center business and in the context of scholarly endeavors such as PINS. Derek joined us as a Faculty Affiliate and we look forward to continued collaboration with him in this capacity in the years ahead.

*Dr. Gary Zajac
CJRC Managing Director*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Criminal Justice Research Center Welcomes New Personnel

Constanza Silva Gallardo is a Postdoctoral Scholar for the Criminal Justice Research Center. Constanza will work with Professors Jeremy Staff and Jennifer Maggs on the Millennium Cohort Study data to assess developmental risk factors linked to substance use initiation, continuation, and negative consequences among adolescents. Constanza received her M.S. and Ph.D. in Biobehavioral Health from The Pennsylvania State University. Her dissertation explored nicotine- and cigarette smoking-induced alterations on genomic marks under different exposure scenarios from a translational perspective. This interdisciplinary and translational research approach aimed to address the complexities of nicotine addiction and substance co-use at different developmental stages. During her doctoral training, she was awarded two highly competitive predoctoral training grants (T32) on Biomedical Big Data (B2D2K) and Prevention and Methodology (PAMT). Her overall goals are to develop an interdisciplinary research collaborative program in her home country on adolescent substance use risk factors considering diverse contexts and countries.

CJRC New Personnel Continued

Clare Strange is a Postdoctoral Scholar for the Criminal Justice Research Center (CJRC) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing (PCS). In this role she works on projects of interest to PCS, with a particular focus on racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system. Additionally, Clare implements her own research agenda independently and through collaborations with CJRC and faculty members from the Department of Sociology and Criminology. Clare received her MSW from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College (2013) and her PhD from the University of Cincinnati School of Criminal Justice (2021). She recently completed a Doctoral Fellowship under Dr. Sheetal Ranjan at William Paterson University, evaluating Jersey Shore University Medical Center's first hospital-based violence intervention program (HVIP). Drawing upon her early career experiences as a reentry social worker, Clare's scholarly interests center on sentencing and corrections and include: (1) the drivers of criminal justice actor decision-making and their implications for punishment and treatment outcomes; (2) justice process and treatment experiences and their contributions to recidivism and health outcomes; and (3) developing, disseminating, and evaluating evidence-based correctional tools. At its core, Clare's research aims to uncover and address the mechanisms that hinder the impartial or effective nature of punishment or treatment interventions with current or formerly justice-involved people. Through her research endeavors Clare has experience designing and conducting quantitative analyses using large administrative data sets and qualitative analyses using interview and focus group data.

Yiwen Zhang is a Ph.D. candidate in Criminology at Penn State University. Her research interests encompass mass incarceration, prisoner reentry, and substance use issues. She is a graduate assistant and has worked on several projects, including random drug testing in prisons, drug take-back in rural communities, and providing certified recovery specialist assistance to reentrants with opioid use disorders. Her most recent thesis focused on the effects of the prison boom, in the beginning of the mass incarceration era, on rural employment in the United States. Yiwen graduated from Pepperdine University with a master's degree in Public Policy. She received her B.A. at Peking University. Prior to joining Penn State she was a research scholar at New York University's Marron Institute. At Marron she collaborated with correctional practitioners across the country and managed pilot studies aiming to improve prison safety and management.



From left to right: Constanza Silva Gallardo, Clare Strange, and Yiwen Zhang

CJRC Seed Grant and Enhanced Seed Grant Program

The CJRC has for many years offered an annual seed funding program intended to assist PSU faculty (including Commonwealth Campuses) to pursue external funding by (1) buying out an investigator's time, (2) supporting project-specific research meetings or workshops, (3) providing research personnel support (CJRC, Graduate, and Undergraduate wages and salaries), (4) collecting pilot data, and (5) other research-related activities in the areas of criminal justice and criminology. We strongly encourage interdisciplinary research and collaboration between units within Penn State.

The regular CJRC seed funding program has traditionally offered support of up to \$7,500. In 2021, thanks to support to the CJRC from the Penn State Social Science Research Institute, we are able to offer an Enhanced Seed Grant program with awards of up to \$20,000. Please note that this funding line is separate from the regular CJRC seed grant program, which is still being offered under a separate announcement.

Please go to the Criminal Justice Research Center Seed Funding Program page [here](#).

We encourage you to apply for either of these, which are open to faculty across the university. Please contact the CJRC Managing Director Gary Zajac at gxz3@psu.edu with any questions.

We look forward to reading your proposals.

Penn State News recently featured the CJRC 2021 Seed Grant Announcement. Read the article [here](#).

Jeffrey Ulmer Named 2021 American Society of Criminology Fellow

Congratulations to Jeffrey Ulmer, faculty affiliate and incoming CJRC director, for being named a 2021 American Society of Criminology (ASC) Fellow! This prestigious distinction recognizes scholars who have made significant and long term contributions to advancing the science of criminology and criminal justice, in Jeff's case most notably in the areas of sentencing and punishment. For more information on Jeff being named as an ASC Fellow, please read the announcement [here](#).



Fall Speaker Series

The following speakers will present or have presented as part of the Fall Speaker Series:

Dr. Robin Engel University of Cincinnati Director, International Association of Chiefs of Police
Friday, September 24 | Noon-1:00pm

Dr. Beth Huebner University of Missouri-St. Louis Professor and Graduate Program Director
Friday, October 8 | Noon-1:00pm

Dr. Abenaa Jones, Penn State University Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, CJRC Faculty Affiliate, Thursday, October 28 | Noon-1:00pm

Julia Dillavou, Penn State University Doctoral Candidate

Christopher Seto, Penn State University Doctoral Candidate and University Graduate Fellow

Brittany Freelin, Penn State University Doctoral Candidate

Friday, December 3 | Noon-1:00pm

All talks are in 406 Oswald Tower. For More Information: Email rer201@psu.edu

The Speaker Series is co-sponsored by the Criminal Justice Research Center and the Department of Sociology and Criminology.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Commonwealth Campus Center-Node (C3N) Seed Grant Projects

The Criminal Justice Research Center recently launched a new webpage to highlight our Commonwealth Campus Center-Node (C3N) Seed Grant Projects.

The Commonwealth Campus Center-Node (C3N) program was begun in 2019 under the auspices of and with funding from the Office of the Senior Vice President for Research, Office of the Provost, and the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses. The goal is to foster and support research by faculty at the Commonwealth Campuses in a wide variety of fields. The CJRC coordinates the Criminal Justice C3N node. One initiative of C3N is to provide seed funding to Commonwealth Campus faculty to support the development of their research.

[View the C3N Seed Grant Projects](#)

New Commonwealth Campus Center-Nodes Funded Projects

The Commonwealth Campus Center-Nodes (C3N) initiative engages faculty from across Penn State who are conducting criminal justice research as part of the Criminal Justice C3N (CJ C3N). 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. This month we would like to highlight the 2021 seed grant funded projects.

Femoids: Incels' Gendered Spectrum of Female Political Agency: Kurt Fowler, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Abington, will be analyzing an existing dataset consisting of threads gathered from online message boards populated by incels. Incels are a group of exclusively male internet users who are "involuntarily celibate." Specifically, this research will look at the type of language incels have created to discuss gender as a spectrum of political agency and the terms they've invented to describe their belief that women wield the majority of political agency in modern society. This project extends existing research already accepted by a leading criminology journal on the language they've created to describe the men's spectrum of political agency.

Policies on Medication Assisted Treatment and Medical Marijuana in Problem-Solving Courts: Jennifer Murphy, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Berks, and Nathan Kruis Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Altoona will serve as Co-Principal Investigators for this project. The use of medication assisted treatment (MAT) (i.e., methadone, suboxone, Vivitrol) for opioid use disorder in problem-solving courts (i.e., drug courts, mental health courts, veterans courts, etc.) continues to be controversial. While some courts have permitted the use of MAT, other courts have restricted its use as part of treatment. Because individual courts determine whether they will permit MAT, it is not known which courts do or do not permit clients to access this treatment. This project will survey all problem-solving courts in Pennsylvania to assess the rules and restrictions regarding MAT.

The Effects of Belief in Pure Evil and White Supremacy on State-Level Social Justice Outcomes: Colleen E. Mills, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Abington, and Russell J. Webster, Associate Professor of Psychology at Abington, will serve as Co-Principal Investigators for this project. The project intends to examine the effects of two individual difference variables—belief in pure evil (BPE) and white nationalism/supremacist beliefs (WNS)—on state-level sociopolitical outcomes that undermine social justice. A number of individual-level studies have shown that people who believe more in pure evil are more likely to support punitive responses to crime and offenders as well as demonize offenders (Webster & Saucier, 2013; 2015; 2018; Vasturia et al., 2018). Two studies (Watkins & Webster, 2018; Webster & Watkins, 2019) with national samples saw WNS beliefs correlated with a variety of psychological outcomes, including support for racist and anti-immigrant attitudes and policies. The current project intends to extend these findings by linking BPE and WNS to more "real-world" outcomes.

Western Pennsylvania Veterans Prison to College Initiative: Sandra L. Trappen, Assistant Professor of Administration of Justice at Greater Allegheny and Jonathan Preece, a student research assistant, will examine the social factors that may predispose justice involved veterans to success or failure in a prison to college education program. The project will work with federal probation officers and veteran cases affiliated with the Western Pennsylvania Veterans Court. The research aims to understand not only the risks but, moreover, the special needs of veterans; we aim to exceed the limitations of traditional risk management instruments by taking a trauma-informed needs-based approach to correlating social factors with institutional supports that can enhance education outcomes for justice involved veterans.

CORRECTIONS AND RE-ENTRY

CJRC Advisory Board member and PADOCA agency partner Dr. Bret Bucklen leads new NIJ report

JRC Advisory Board member and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections agency partner Dr. Bret Bucklen has led a report for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) on Risk Assessment and Corrections. Read the report [here](#).

Penn State News Features Read to Your Child/Grandchild (RYCG) Program

A recent Penn State News article features the Read to Your Child/Grandchild (RYCG) program. Esther Prins, Professor of Education, and colleagues Tabitha Stickel, doctoral candidate in the College of Education, and Anna Kaiper-Marquez, Assistant Teaching Professor, College of Education, discuss their work [here](#). 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.

TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION

“Correctional Responses to Opioid Crisis: Progress, Challenges, and Lessons Learned” Presentation

The Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse 2021 Annual Conference was held in May and members and affiliates of the CJRC presented at a panel session titled “Correctional Responses to Opioid Crisis: Progress, Challenges, and Lessons Learned.” The presenters included Derek Kreager, CJRC Center Director, Steven Seitchik and Bret Bucklen, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, and Jared Lutz, RASE Community Recovery Organization. Their presentation can be view [here](#).

President Eric J. Barron discusses NIJ funded CJRC project on opioid distribution networks led Glenn Sterner, Penn State Abington

At the meeting of the Penn State Board of Trustees on September 17, President Eric J. Barron discussed the broad impact of research at the university, including the NIJ funded CJRC project on opioid distribution networks led by Glenn Sterner at Penn State Abington. Read the article [here](#).

COURTS AND SENTENCING

“Inhabited Institutions and Geographic Arbitrariness in Capital Prosecution,” topic presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction

At the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction on August 5th, Jeffery T. Ulmer, incoming CJRC Director and Gary Zajac, CJRC Managing Director presented their work on “Inhabited Institutions and Geographic Arbitrariness in Capital Prosecution,” in a session on *Interactions, Organizations, and Institutions*.

New article in Justice Quarterly by Miranda Galvin and Jeffrey Ulmer

A recent article titled “Expanding Our Understanding of Focal Concerns: Alternative Sentences, Race, and “Salvageability”” was published in *Justice Quarterly*. The article is by Miranda Galvin, PA Commission on Sentencing and CJRC Postdoctoral Scholar, and Jeffrey Ulmer, faculty affiliate and incoming CJRC director. The authors test “whether offender race, gender, and prior histories of substance use affect assessments of salvageability as indicated by prosecutor decisions to pre-screen offenders for admittance into an intensive rehabilitation.” Read the article [here](#).

Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing New Publication in Federal Sentencing Reporter

Colleagues at the [Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing](#) (PCS) recently published their work in *Federal Sentencing Reporter*. The article titled, “Harnessing the Power of Data: The Role of Sentencing Commissions in the Information Age,” discusses the importance of complete and accurate data to develop policy and support decision making. The recently published article is by Mark Bergstrom, Executive Director of PCS, Brett Miller, Research Data Analyst at PCS and [Jordan Zvonkovich](#), CJRC Graduate Assistant at PCS.

Clare Strange, PA Commission on Sentencing Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, publishes in *Crime & Delinquency*

A new article was recently published in *Crime & Delinquency* titled [“Sentencing Add-Ons and Implications for Disparities in a Guidelines State.”](#) The authors include Clare Strange, PA Commission on Sentencing Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, Joshua Cochran, University of Cincinnati, John Wooldredge, University of Cincinnati, and Ben Feldmeyer, University of Cincinnati.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

New Project: Effects of Tobacco & ENDS Policies on Patterns of Adolescent ENDS Use

The emergence of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) use may be a double-edged sword for public health. On one hand, ENDS may assist tobacco cessation among adult smokers. On the other, they may be a pathway to tobacco initiation and nicotine dependence for new users, particularly adolescents, and ENDS may carry unique risks to lung health. Tobacco control policies proliferated in recent decades (e.g. public smoking bans, increased excise taxes, youth access restrictions, and advertising constraints). Studies indicate such policies contributed greatly to declines in smoking, particularly among youth. Yet, the potential impact of tobacco control policies on ENDS use remains unclear. Further, ENDS-specific policies implemented more recently have not been well studied. Thus, research is needed to examine how tobacco policies and emerging ENDS policies affect trajectories of ENDS use and related tobacco use as adolescents transition into early adulthood, a critical period for prevention.

This research examines policy impacts on ENDS use as well as co-use of tobacco and ENDS. The team will also assess differences in policy effects according to developmentally-relevant parental contexts (e.g., parental smoking or ENDS use; household bans on use; parent monitoring). Finally, to account for fundamental causes of health disparities, we analyze how policy effects vary by gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and geographic contexts.

The project team consists of Principal Investigator, Brian C. Kelly, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. Co-Investigators: Mike Vuolo, Ph.D, Department of Sociology, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, Jeremy Staff, Ph.D, Department of Sociology and Criminology, Pennsylvania State University, CJRC Faculty Affiliate, Jennifer L. Maggs, Ph.D, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Pennsylvania State University, CJRC Faculty Affiliate, and Constanza Paulina Silva Gallardo, Ph.D, CJRC Postdoctoral Scholar.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse awarded \$1,059,608 to support the project over a 3 year period. This project aims to assess the impact of tobacco and ENDS policies on longitudinal trajectories of ENDS and related tobacco use (initiation, prevalence, duration, frequency, and cessation) among adolescents. Also, the research team determine whether tobacco and ENDS policies are more influential for ENDS trajectories of specific subgroups defined by parenting contexts and individual- and contextual-level inequalities.

Beyond providing the first nationally representative repeated observations study of the effects of tobacco and ENDS policies on within-individual variations in ENDS use among adolescents, this study contributes in additional ways. First, if particular policies reduce ENDS use, wider implementation could decrease long-term dependence and negative health effects as adolescents age into adulthood. Second, identifying policies that prevent transitions to tobacco use by early adulthood could improve population health and lead to decreases in healthcare expenditures. Third, the results will demonstrate which policies have wide impact and whether specific policies benefit certain youth, which is important for minimizing health disparities and improving population health more broadly.

This project was supported by the CJRC seed grant program.

Death Certifier Education Project in PSU News

The Death Certifier Education Project was featured recently in the [Penn State News](#). This Penn State-led project is educating coroners, medical examiners, and others in the death-certifier community in Pennsylvania about the reporting of substances associated with accidental overdose. The Death Certifier Education Project, is a collaborative effort with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. It aims to address issues that can occur with the death reporting process that can place communities and residents at risk from misinformation.

The project is led by principal investigator [Glenn Sterner](#), assistant professor of criminal justice, a faculty affiliate of the CJRC, and a founding member of the Consortium on Substance Use and Addiction. The project team consists of [Elaine Arsenault](#), a researcher at the Criminal Justice Research Center; Yunfeng Shi, associate professor of health policy and administration; Jennifer Kraschnewski, Project ECHO director; Erica Francis, Project Manager at Project ECHO; Emily Kane and Kristine Gonnella with National Nurse-Led Care Consortium, NNCC, and Kelly Wolgast, assistant dean for outreach and professional development in the College of Nursing. The team also engaged two undergraduate research assistants to promote high impact learning for students at the institution.

The DOH provided funding for this project. The CJRC and the Social Science Research Institute provided pilot funding that led to this project.

Mike LaForest, PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, publishes in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*

A new article in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* titled "[Can Precision Policing Reduce Gun Violence? Evidence from "Gang Takedowns" in New York City](#)" is authored by Aaron Chalfin, University of Pennsylvania, Mike LaForest, PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, and Jacob Kaplan, Princeton University.

PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, Mike LaForest, presents at Niskanen Center's summer panel series

Mike LaForest, PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, presented his research on the effects of gang takedowns in the Niskanen Center's summer panel series on reducing violent crime on August 2. View the video of Mike's presentation [here](#), Mike's presentation starts at 35:23.

Michael LaForest, PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC,
publishes in *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*

A new article titled "[Street Light Outages, Public Safety and Crime Attraction](#)" was recently published in the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*. Aaron Chalfin, University of Pennsylvania, Jacob Kaplan, Princeton University, and Mike LaForest, PA Department of Corrections Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, authored the article.

Clare Strange, PA Commission on Sentencing Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC,
publishes in the *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research*

A new case study in the *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* titled "Hospital-based violence intervention: strategies for cultivating internal support, community partnerships, and strengthening practitioner engagement" is authored by Sheetal Ranjan, William Paterson University of New Jersey, Aakash K. Shah, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Clare Strange, PA Commission on Sentencing Postdoctoral Scholar at the CJRC, and Kate Stillman, William Paterson University of New Jersey. Read more [here](#).

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