

## **FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK**

WOW!!! What an important week of activities for CJRC faculty and graduate associates. We celebrated our 12th Annual Walter C. Reckless Lecture. Wes Skogan's (Northwestern University) talk and Domingo Herraiz' (Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services) comments on community policing were very informative and stimulated a great deal of post-lecture discussion. Wes' comments about evaluation research in police departments were also "eye-opening" for us, and at times a bit jarring as he made it clear that the typical faculty and graduate resources are not always sufficient for engaging in major evaluation research projects. We are also appreciative that Wes was very forthcoming in informal meetings with graduate students interested in policing research. Thanks Beckett Broh, María Vélez, Jessica Kiner, and Amanda Bachor for all the logistical work to make this another successful Reckless Lecture. You too, Laurie.

Up next was John Powell (University of Minnesota), who in his formal presentation provided data on Columbus' racial, social and economic linkages. His Roundtable Discussion was very insightful regarding the role of race and the way research can have an impact on society. He also provided insights on developing a major Center with limited university resources. We will definitely try to take those lessons to heart. On Friday, a number of CJRC affiliates enjoyed our first lecture (since my tenure as Director of CJRC) by an economist, as Daniel Glaeser presented on the "Legal Origins" of common law versus civil law citizens. Thanks Bruce for bringing this talk to our attention.

Finally, on Monday, the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction held its every 18- month Criminal Justice Research Conference. This provided us with the opportunity to show case on-going work on crime and criminal justice at Ohio State, and to learn from the policy community about their on-going research, and the types of work that would be most beneficial in helping to inform criminal justice policy. Accolades to Bill Ackerman, Paul Bellair, Chris Browning, Joe Donnermeyer, Seth Feinberg, Brian Kowalski, Laurie Krivo, Rick Lundman, Kent Shafer, María Vélez, and Jeremy Wilson for sharing your high quality research. Danielle, Patrick, Stacia, Valerie, and Yolonda, it was great to have such a strong contingent of Ohio State graduate and undergraduate students in the audience. We do hope that the day was enjoyable and provided you with a meaningful learning experience. We also shared reunions with a number of former Ohio State graduates who are now engaged in criminal justice research in policy settings: Mark Davis (Office of Criminal Justice Services); Gayle Bickle, Coretta (Pettway) Jones, Brian Martin, Lee Norton, Evalyn Parks, Jennifer (Johnjay) Pribe (Department of Rehabilitation and Correction); and wearing a second hat, Yolonda Brown (Ohio Peace Officer's Training Academy).

## **UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST**

May Event:

Monday, May 7th. Dr. Sanford Gordon, assistant professor of Political Science will speak "On the Electoral Incentives of Criminal Prosecutors" at 4:00 p.m. For advanced material, please go to the following website:

<http://www.osu.edu/units/law/CLPSS/Gordon.prosec.pdf>

If you are interested in attending, please email Nancy Darling (darling.30@osu.edu) by May 5th.

Monday, May 21st. Dr. George Tita, assistant professor in the Department of Criminology, Law, and Society at University of California at Irvine, will be visiting OSU's School of Public Policy and Management and the CJRC on May 21st. He will give a talk from 10 to 11:30 am in 300B Fisher Hall (location may change; you will be notified if so). His talk is entitled, "From Boston to Boyle Heights:

A 'Pulling Levers' Approach to Reducing Gun Violence", and will address the issue of reducing gun violence in Los Angeles.

### **WHAT CENTER PARTICIPANTS ARE DOING**

Dr. Rudy Alexander was recently appointed as consulting editor for the Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work. Rudy also had a paper, "Battered Child Syndrome as a Legal Defense to Parricide: Is it Sound Juvenile Justice Policy?" accepted in the Journal for Juvenile Justice and Detention Services.

During the Reckless Lecture, Dr. Simon Dinitz presented the Eighth Annual Public Service Award to Dr. Reginald A. Wilkinson, Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

During the 5th Ohio Criminal Justice Research Conference, the first Simon Dinitz Award for Criminal Justice Research was presented to Dr. Joan Petersilia, professor of Criminology, Law, and Society in the Social Ecology Program at the University of California, Irvine. This newly established award organized by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction is given in honor of Dr. Simon Dinitz, internationally acclaimed criminologist, to recognize excellence in criminal justice research.

### **FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Funding opportunities from the CJRC will be announced by Dr. Ruth Peterson in the next week. The CJRC's Research Awards program is designed to facilitate crime and justice research by CJRC affiliates. We will provide contact information for this funding opportunity in the next newsletter.

### **FEATURED GRADUATE STUDENT**

Khalilah Brown,  
Ph.D. candidate in the  
Department of Political Science  
The Ohio State University

Khalilah is a third year Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science at OSU. She received a B.A. in Government from the University of Virginia. She has just finished the written portion of her candidacy exams. In the next week, she will defend her written answers as well as her dissertation proposal during the oral portion of her candidacy exams. Her general area of concentration is in American Politics with a special focus on political psychology, urban politics, and race/gender/ethnicity.

Khalilah's main research interest is in investigating the role of race in shaping politics in the U.S. Her dissertation will examine the impact of felony disenfranchisement laws on the political participation and representation of communities of color. Felony disenfranchisement laws disqualify current, and in many cases, former felony offenders from voting. These laws have a disproportionate impact on black men and Khalilah contends that black political power is threatened now more than ever. According to Human Rights Watch and The Sentencing Project, 1.4 million African American men (13% of the overall population of black men) are permanently disenfranchised. She argues that if current rates of incarceration persist, three in ten of the next generation of black men can expect to be disenfranchised at some point in their lifetimes. This has important implications for the political participation of African Americans. Consequently, Khalilah's dissertation is driven by two major research questions: 1) what does the proliferation of felony disenfranchisement laws mean for the inclusiveness of the American electorate?; and 2) given the disproportionate impact of these laws

on African Americans, what is the role of black elites in their adoption? To answer the first question, Khalilah plans to assess the extent to which states vary in both their disenfranchisement statutes and the political impact of these laws. By doing so, she hopes to provide a framework by which to understand why some states permanently prohibit voting by former felons and others allow for enfranchisement to be regained via an appeals process or allow persons committed of a felony to vote from prison.

To better understand the role that black elites play in shaping these laws, Khalilah plans to interview state legislators and advocacy groups who work with former felons. For this qualitative component of her dissertation, Khalilah plans to interview informants from five states with the highest percentages of disenfranchised African American men: Alabama (31.5%), Florida (31.2%), Mississippi (28.6%), Virginia (25.0%), and Texas (20.8%). She hopes that the interview data will be useful in gauging the salience of felony disenfranchisement laws for the political and social agendas of black elites. Khalilah also expects to interview former felons from these five states in order to understand the impact that felony disenfranchisement laws have on their everyday lives.

For Khalilah, understanding felony disenfranchisement laws is important because these laws are more than just matters of criminal justice; rather they pose significant threats to the ability of African Americans to secure and maintain political power.

This proposed dissertation research is just the beginning for Khalilah. In general, she hopes to contribute to the field of criminal justice by incorporating political science into the criminal justice literature. An important aim for Khalilah is to illustrate that criminal justice policies have political implications. She believes that the field of criminal justice is understudied by political scientists, and this is unfortunate given that the criminal justice system has emerged as an important institution with significant effects on the quality of life of many U.S. citizens.

Apart from investigating the intersections of race and politics in her research, Khalilah also likes teaching about this topic. This summer, Khalilah will take her interests in African American politics into the classroom where she will teach her first course on Black Politics (Pol Sci 504). She has organized it as a seminar-style class where she will discuss both traditional forms (e.g., voting) and non-traditional forms (e.g., protests, music, and poetry) of African American political participation.

Upon completion of her doctorate, Khalilah hopes to become a professor in a research university where she can focus on both research and teaching. Just as important, Khalilah wants to work as a political consultant so that she can advise grassroots organizations, particularly those who serve minority communities, about issues related to race and criminal justice. She would like her research to galvanize communities of color into political action.

On a more personal note, Khalilah is pleased to announce that in August, she will be married in her hometown of Lynchburg, Virginia.

## **CREDITS AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

Thanks to all of you who sent your suggestions and announcements. We encourage you to keep us informed about any events that might be of interest to CJRC participants as well as any suggestions that you have for activities or programs. To contact the newsletter editor, please email María Vélez at [velez.17@osu.edu](mailto:velez.17@osu.edu) or by phone at 247-6736. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please send María your email address.