

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

This issue's featured student affiliate:

Danice Brown (Psychology)

Our Winter Quarter seminar series started off on the right foot, with an excellent presentation by Danielle Payne, PhD student in sociology, of her paper with Benjamin Cornwell (PhD student in sociology at The University of Chicago) entitled "Modeling Peer Influences on Delinquency: Do Non-intimate or Indirect Contacts Matter?" Their paper employs friendship network data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) to identify with greater particularity the process by which peers come to influence adolescent delinquency. Their study represented a novel improvement on the usual technique, which asks adolescents to assess the delinquency of their close friends. The network data allowed Danielle and Ben to capture the relationship of the self-reported delinquency of teens in an adolescent's close and more distant peer network to that adolescent's own self-reported delinquency. They found that, for the most part, there is a kind of "decay" in the peer effect the further out one looks from an adolescent's immediate associates. Thank you, Danielle, for a great presentation.

Our second seminar was held on February 25th. D. Wayne Osgood, Professor of Crime, Law, and Justice and Sociology at Pennsylvania State University, presented his research entitled, "Routine Activities, Role Transitions, and Crime During the Transition to Adulthood." In this research, he framed a routine activities analysis within a life course perspective. Existing research has shown, for example, that the transition to marriage or full-time employment may serve to explain "aging out" of criminal activity in the late teens and early twenties. Dr. Osgood showed that the picture may, in fact, be more complicated, and that it may be a correlate of marriage or full-time employment, such as a decline in unstructured socialization, that best explains the phenomenon of "aging out." Conducting separate analyses for men and women (taking into account the different meanings of role transitions by gender), he found that time spent in unstructured socializing does, to some extent, explain participation in violent crime, net of role statuses such as marriage, cohabitation, or full-time employment. Dr. Osgood's talk was well-received, and he generously volunteered time to talk with Ohio State graduate students as well as a special contingent of West Virginia University undergraduate students who were visiting Ohio State with Dr. Rachael Woldoff, a graduate alumnus of the OSU sociology department. Thank you, Wayne, for your visit! And thank you to our visitors from WVU.

Please be sure to mark your calendar for this year's Reckless Lecture, which will feature Jeffrey Fagan of Columbia University, and watch this space in our next issue for the highlights of Bruce Western's (Princeton) recent presentation.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Note: The submission deadline for the annual American Society of Criminology meetings is fast approaching. Please review the submission guidelines on the ASC website at <http://www.asc41.com>, and be sure to submit your abstract or paper on or before March 15, 2005.

This year's Walter C. Reckless Memorial Lecture will be given by Jeffrey Fagan, Professor of Law and Public Health, Columbia University, and Director of the Center for Crime, Community, and Law at Columbia Law School. Please join us on April 19, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. in the Grand Lounge of the OSU Faculty Club (181 S. Oval Drive). Dr. Fagan's talk is entitled, "Science and the Illusion of Deterrence in the Death Penalty: Cold Fusion All Over Again." For those intrigued by this title, the abstract for his talk is below:

For nearly 30 years, social scientists and economists have fought over evidence of the deterrent

effects of capital punishment. Early evidence claiming that executions deter homicides was disputed in the 1970s by blue-ribbon panels of criminologists and statisticians. However, a new wave of recent studies claims that each execution will deter between three and 18 murders, fueling a revival of deterrence as a rationale to expand the use of capital punishment. Such strong claims are not unusual in either the social or natural sciences, but like nearly all claims of strong causal effects from any social or legal intervention, the claims of a new deterrence fall apart under close scrutiny. These new studies are fraught with technical and conceptual errors: inappropriate methods of statistical analysis, failures to consider all the relevant factors that drive murder rates, missing data on key variables in key states, the tyranny of a few outlier states and years, and the absence of any direct test of deterrence. These studies fail to reach the demanding standards of the behavioral and natural sciences to make such strong claims, standards such as replication and basic comparisons and robustness in the face of counterfactuals. Some simple examples and contrasts lead to a rejection of the idea that either death sentences or executions deter murder. The claims of a “new deterrence” recall earlier episodes of fantastic scientific claims, such as the Cold Fusion episode in 1989, that offer the illusion of breakthrough in the face of scientific complexity and uncertainty.

WHAT CENTER PARTICIPANTS ARE DOING

Joshua Dressler (Law) presented this year’s University Distinguished Lecture on February 22. The title of the lecture was “Moral and Criminal Law Reflections on Battered Women Who Kill Sleeping Abusers: Convict or Acquit and Why.” For those who were not able to attend the lecture, the University has established a website where the text of the lecture and an archived video are available. Check it out at <http://www.osu.edu/lecture/index.html>. In addition to the University Distinguished Lecture, Professor Dressler also gave a lecture entitled, “African Americans and the Criminal Justice System” at the Moritz College of Law.

Prior to these lectures, he participated in (and gave a keynote speech at) an international criminal procedure invitation-only conference concerned with reform of the criminal justice system of the People’s Republic of China. Attendees included law reformers from the PRC, Taiwan, Korea, and Russia, as well as three American professors. A future meeting is scheduled, and will likely be held in Korea. Finally, he has been appointed to the Editorial Advisory Board for the Journal of Legal Education, and the Advisory Board for legal publisher Lexis/Nexis.

Seth Feinberg (Sociology, MontanaStateUniversity) has accepted a new position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at Western Washington University, beginning Fall 2005. He will be teaching in the areas of criminal justice and criminology, deviant behavior, and research methods. Information on his new institution can be found at <http://www.wvu.edu>. Best wishes on this exciting move, Seth! While at Montana State, Seth also taught a course in Ghana. Here’s a great article on the course, along with a nice picture (Seth is the dashing fellow in the orange t-shirt): <http://www.montana.edu/commser/v/csnews/nwview.php?article=2187>.

Michael Maltz (CJRC) and Elizabeth Stasny (Statistics) have received a grant from the American Statistical Association to “Develop and Test Methods for Imputing Monthly UCR Crime Data.” This is in addition to two other recently received grants, one from the National Institute of Justice to develop a UCR utility, and the other (with Laurie Krivo and Ruth Peterson) from OCJS to develop new methods of analyzing NIBRS data. CJRC students Harry Weiss and Danielle Payne are working with Mike on these latter two grants.

Matisa Wilbon (Sociology) successfully defended her dissertation entitled, “Sex ‘N the Hood: The

Interrelationships among Neighborhood Characteristics, Parenting Behaviors, Peer Networks, and Adolescent Risky Sex.” Her committee members were Chris Browning (co-chair), Dana Haynie, Ruth Peterson (co-chair) and Raymond Noe. Matisa will be among those hooded during the Winter Quarter commencement ceremonies. Congratulations, Matisa!

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice has another upcoming special issue with a theme that may be of interest to CJRC participants. The theme of the February 2006 issue is “Occupational Stress in Criminal Justice.” The Guest Editor, John Hepburn, encourages submissions on a broad range of topics that examine the situational constraints of the work and/or the structural arrangements of the workplace as causes of occupational stress among criminal justice professionals; coping strategies by workers and/or agency adaptations to workplace stressors; and the physical, psychological, and behavioral effects of stress on the individual and/or the costs of stress to the organization. All manuscripts should be no more than 30 typed, double-spaced pages including tables, figures, and references. Please direct inquiries to John Hepburn, JCCJ guest editor, via e-mail (John.Hepburn@asu.edu) or telephone (480-965-7085).

Deadline:

April 15, 2005

The Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice invites submissions for a special issue on Crime and Criminal Justice Issues in the Caribbean, focusing on policing, courts, corrections, race, gender, and ethnicity issues, and crime prevention strategies and programs. The manuscript should be 20-25 pages in length and should conform to APA style. For additional information, contact Dr. Robert McCormack, at mccormac@tcnj.edu, telephone 609-771-3185, or Dr. Peter K.B. St. Jean, caribbeancriminology@yahoo.com, telephone 716-645-2417 (X468).

Deadline:

June 15, 2005

Editor-in-Chief Dennis Sullivan reports that the journal Contemporary Justice Review invites submissions of essay titles/abstracts for a special issue on “Drugs, Healing, and the Expansion or Repression of Human Consciousness.” The array of potential topics is far-ranging, but deal generally with contrasting state and governmental efforts to control and suppress drug use with the potential social value of drugs such as marijuana, LSD, mescaline, and related hallucinogens. Those who are interested in submitting a potential topic, or who would like to learn more about the plans for the special issue, should contact CJR Assistant Editor Diane Simmons Williams at dsw27@earthlink.net or Editor-in-Chief Dennis Sullivan at gezellig@global2000.net. Titles and abstracts are due June 15, 2005, with final selections to be made by July 15, 2005. Completed articles are expected to be about 25 or fewer double-spaced pages in length, and will be due January 31, 2006.

Deadline for Titles and Abstracts:

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January 31, 2005

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June 15, 2005

FEATURED FACULTY PARTICIPANT - DANICE BROWN

Psychology

Danice Brown is a second-year graduate student in psychology at Ohio State. She grew up in Niagara Falls, New York, where she became interested in psychology through a high school course. She noted that many of the researchers cited in her class were from Ohio State. In addition, she had acquired counseling experience when she was selected to serve as a peer counselor. Intrigued by the strength of the counseling psychology program at Ohio State, and the prospect of doing her own research (and familiar with Columbus through family members who live in the area), she decided to attend Ohio State as an undergraduate honors student in psychology in 1999.

An assiduous student, Danice completed most of her undergraduate work by 2002, but stayed on for her fourth year to complete her honors thesis. During her undergraduate student years, she found time to work as a research assistant for CJRC, under the direction of Professors Laurie Krivo and Ruth Peterson, cleaning data and conducting a review of the literature on neighborhood crime. She also participated for 2 summers in the Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP), a program intended to introduce talented minority students to the academic research process in preparation for graduate school and employment in academe. Student participants prepare academic research papers for presentation at an annual conference, held at a Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) participating institution each year. The Columbus Dispatch featured Danice in an article on the program this past summer.

Danice completed her honors thesis in 2003, and graduated magna cum laude. Her honors thesis was entitled, "The academic self-presentational style of African American students." In this research, she gathered her own data, and found that African American students may respond to low teacher expectations for academic achievement by adopting an incompetent self-presentational style, notwithstanding actual ability. On the strength of her undergraduate record, she was accepted into the graduate program in psychology at Ohio State, with a primary interest in counseling psychology.

She has amassed experience in counseling through her work as a practicum counselor in the Psychological Services Center, where she provides individual counseling services to university students. In addition, she is an academic advisor in the Psychology Undergraduate Advising Office, a position for which she is well-qualified, as a former Ohio State psychology undergraduate who successfully negotiated the transition to graduate school.

Currently, Danice is busy finishing her master's thesis, in which she explores the determinants of resiliency among African American adolescents. Specifically, she examines the reasons why some African American adolescents in negative environments are able to persevere and succeed, despite the odds. Her research considers the respective roles of racial socialization (family socialization that buffers the impact of racism and promotes a sense of cultural pride) and social support as two factors that may be important for distinguishing outcomes among these adolescents. As with her honors thesis, she is gathering and analyzing her own data, and is working now to write up her results, with the hope of obtaining her MA this spring.

As is evident from Danice's professional activities, she is interested in both research and counseling, and has demonstrated success on both fronts. Her enthusiasm for both can perhaps be reconciled by what they have in common—both paths require an inquisitive and interested mind. Even a short conversation with Danice reveals that her mind is both; she is so interested in her chosen field, in fact, that she often uses her free time to read up on disorders with which she is less familiar.

Danice confesses that she also spends at least a little of that free time watching DVDs of "Family Guy," "The Simpsons," and "Spongebob Squarepants," which means she is able to go toe-to-toe with other graduate students on the best quotes from those shows. She also likes to catch the occasional movie, and recently saw "Hotel Rwanda," which she describes as "good, but very sad."

Danice's next step is to complete her PhD, at which point she will have to consider her future career interests. However, her diverse experience and genuine interest in psychology will stand her in good stead whatever her choice. While I think Danice would make important contributions to the body of psychological knowledge, her manner is down-to-earth and kind, almost soothing, and she would also be an excellent counselor. In fact, I myself have sought Danice out at professional functions just to experience a little "contact zen."

CREDITS AND CONTACT

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 e-mail Lori at <muccino.1@osu.edu>. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please send Lori your e-mail address.