

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S CORNER

**Looking Backward  
and Forward: Activity  
in Our Department**

DR. STEVE BROWN

This issue of *The Carolina Criminologist* provides a sampling of Fall '09 activities within the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice. Despite the deleterious impact of the "flood of '09" in the basement of the Belk Building, students and faculty moved forward with a variety of innovative learning activities. The array of events engaging students in the justice community, guest speakers, international studies and novel virtual experiences collectively constituted a very productive semester. Congratulations to all on the many accomplishments chronicled in this issue.

Looking forward to the Spring issue of *The Carolina Criminologist*, the department will be unveiling dynamic changes in support of the WCU Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This framework will solidify and further advance important initiatives and directions within the department. The quality of learning, exchange of ideas and critical thinking evident throughout our programs are exciting and rewarding. As our QEP unfolds, we will further strengthen these experiences. Vol. 2, No. 2 of *The Carolina Criminologist* will qualify as a "special edition." Look for it shortly after the close of Spring term.



**Chapman Gives Students Account  
of Wrongful Imprisonment**

Glen "Ed" Chapman was released April 3, 2008, from North Carolina's death row, where he spent nearly 15 years for crimes he did not commit. Chapman's release was facilitated by Dr. Pam Laughon, a mitigation specialist and professor at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Chapman and Laughon came to WCU on Oct. 27 to give a special lecture on the facts surrounding Chapman's wrongful conviction and subsequent exoneration. Laughon worked diligently with her team to unveil false police testimony, hidden evidence and ineffective assistance of defense counsel. Criminology and criminal justice students had a rare chance to hear Chapman's story, which included details of his arrest, his 14 years on death row and what life was like after his subsequent release.

*pictured above: Ed Chapman and Pam Laughon show students the map that Chapman drew while on death row. The detailed map of Hickory, N.C., shows where the murder scenes were located. Because poster board was not available in prison, Chapman drew the map section by section and taped it together.*

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

Bryan Merrill

Bryan Merrill is a 1987 graduate of Western Carolina's Criminal Justice Program. In October of that year he was hired by the U.S. Customs Service as a Special Agent, serving in several offices since that time. His appointments have included stops in Marathon Shores, Fla., where he exclusively worked narcotics smuggling investigations, and Columbia, S.C., where he worked a variety of cases including narcotics smuggling, money laundering and textile import fraud. While stationed in Columbia, Merrill served three months in Albania in 1995 as the U.S. team leader for the United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro during the war in Serbia.

After being trained in computer forensics in 2000, he was transferred in 2001 to Fairfax, Va., to a branch of Customs headquarters that oversaw difficult computer forensic investigations. After mentoring computer forensic classes from 2006 to 2008 at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Ga., Merrill accepted a post in Athens, Greece, as the country assistant attaché for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

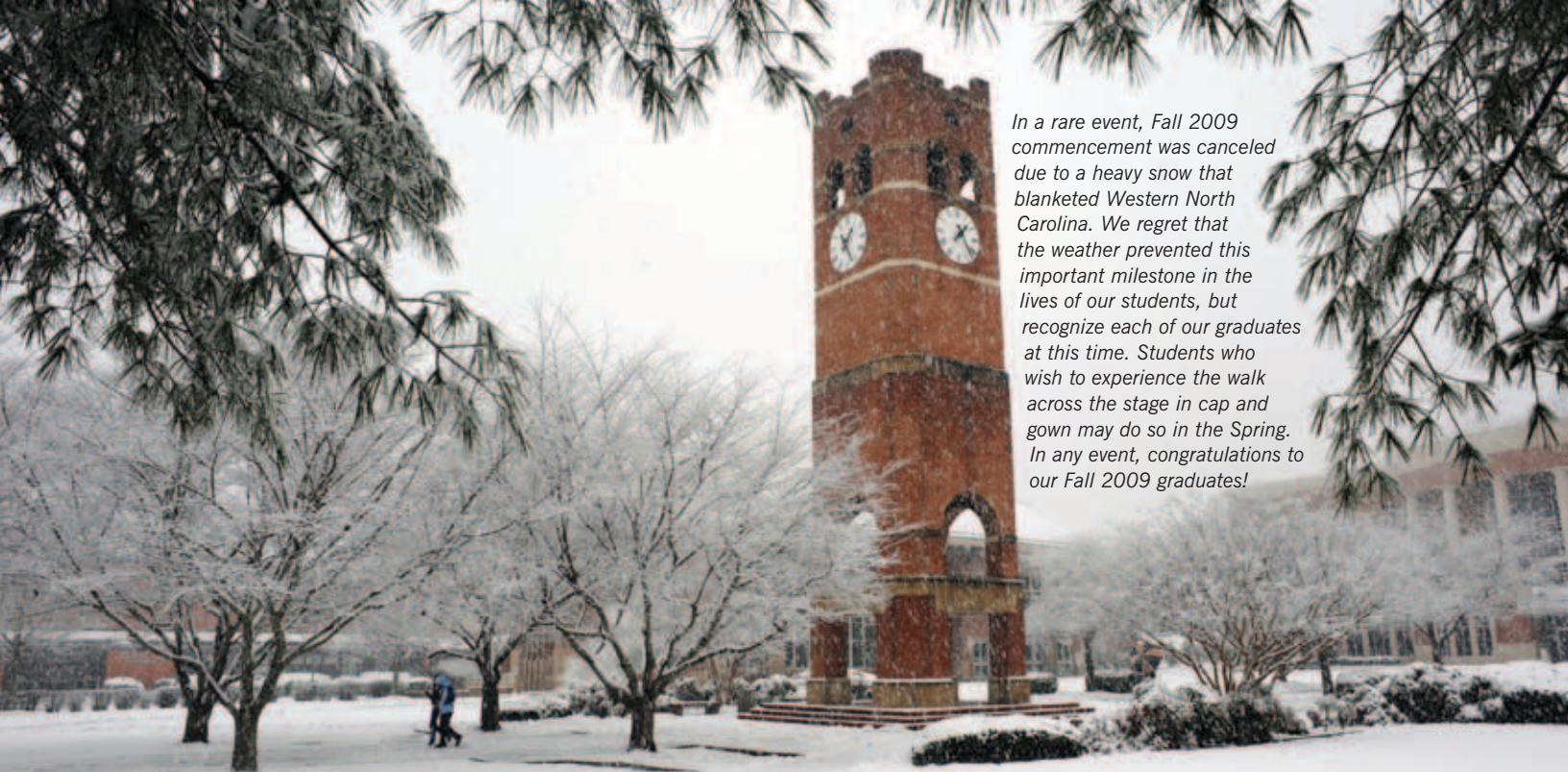
While obtaining his degree from WCU, Merrill was a correctional officer for four and a half years at the N.C. Department of Correction, Division of Prisons. He is a member of the International Association of Computer Investigative Specialists, and since 2005 has held certification from that organization as a computer forensic examiner – the gold standard for law enforcement. He has been a member of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association since 1990. Merrill is grateful to the Customs Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for all the training and opportunities they have provided.

Most of Merrill's family lives around the Hendersonville, N.C., area. He is married to Patricia Merrill, and they have three children and four grandchildren.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Erica "Nikki" Peters

Erica "Nikki" Peters is a Fall 2009 graduate of the residential criminology program. For Peters, part of the appeal of pursuing a degree in criminology and criminal justice was the diversity of choices available to her within the field. She has a passion for research and has decided to pursue a graduate degree in criminal justice at the University of Cincinnati, the alma mater of our own Dr. Jamie Vaske. In fact, Vaske had a tremendous influence on helping Peters to focus her research interests and pursue an advanced degree in criminology and criminal justice with an emphasis on biosocial criminology. After completion of graduate school, Peters hopes to apply the knowledge gained from graduate school and intends to work for a research think tank.



*In a rare event, Fall 2009 commencement was canceled due to a heavy snow that blanketed Western North Carolina. We regret that the weather prevented this important milestone in the lives of our students, but recognize each of our graduates at this time. Students who wish to experience the walk across the stage in cap and gown may do so in the Spring. In any event, congratulations to our Fall 2009 graduates!*

# GRADUATES

## FALL 2009

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Blackwell, Latoya\*\*\*  
Boyd, Katie  
Chapman, Erica  
Conley, Nicholas\*\*  
Creasman, Kevin  
Davies, Benjamin  
Franklin, Michael  
Guertin, Jeffrey\*\*  
Haines, Bart\*\*  
Holland, Kurtis  
Ingraham, Billie Jo  
John, Joseph  
Kirby, Alexander\*  
Kocsis, Crystal\*\*\*  
Lail, Sarah  
Leatherman, Miciah  
Mayse, Karess  
Nantz, Gillian  
Peters, Erica  
Puzon, Heather  
Ra, Arnold  
Ramirez, Jesse  
Rogers, Andrew  
Rosas, Janet

Roughgarden Branan  
Stafford, Ryan\*  
Whitfield, Kyle\*  
Woods, Tyeshia  
Ziegler, Tiffany\*

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

#### DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

Atwell, Adam  
Barnes, Paula  
Bergstedt, Christopher\*\*  
Cox, Matthew  
Dolan, Patricia  
Dyson, Jacob  
Garmon, Anne Marie  
Goins, Paul  
Green, Lori\*  
Haynes, Jeffery  
Johnson, Billie  
Jones, Chasity\*\*  
Jones, Owen\*  
Kelley, Tonya  
McWhirter, Johnny\*\*  
Miller, Donna  
Ortwein, Micah  
Parker, Amanda

Pomphrey, Megan\*  
Poteate, Jeffery\*\*\*  
Rice, Billy\*\*  
Sharp, Scott  
Shuford, Jenia  
Stanley, Jason  
Stanley, Keith  
Waddell, Lydia  
Willard, Terri\*

### EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Long, Jennifer\*  
Long, Justin\*\*  
Love, Christopher\*  
Lunsford, Benjamin  
Matthews, William\*\*  
Nix, John  
Rondel, John  
Shields, Suzanne  
Steele, Michael

\*Cum laude

\*\*Magna cum laude

\*\*\*Summa cum laude



## MESSAGE FROM WALES: Thoughts from Josh Johnson

I am currently studying abroad at the University of Glamorgan, which is located in the southern part of Wales. It is a pretty area with rolling mountains and valleys, but the weather leaves much to be desired. In the month of November we experienced only one day with no rain. Rain is a constant part of life here, and the continually cloudy skies make motivation a very difficult task.

The university itself is built on the side of a hill and there are not many flat or level spots on the whole campus. I have found the quality of teaching to be very good. The professors are inspiring and have a different approach to teaching than we as students are used to in the United States. Classes, or modules, as they are called over here, are a full year long as opposed to a single semester as we have at Western Carolina. Overall I have found the workload to be much less than at WCU. In several of my classes there are only two or three papers as assignments for the entire class, and the topics of these are laid out in the very beginning of the year.

If any students are considering studying abroad, regardless of where they go, I strongly suggest they get an early start on the passport and visa process. Double and triple check all of your documents, including those from your institutions. Due to a date error, my visa was denied a mere week before I was scheduled to fly out of the country and I had to renew my visa, get supporting documents, contact Sen. Heath Schuler's office to help me with this process, travel to Charlotte to have my biometric fingerprint scans taken again due to the fact that they delete the scans as soon as they are sent for security purposes, reschedule my flight, and arrive two weeks later than planned, pushing me right up to the start date for classes and leaving me no time to adjust.

As far as travel goes, I have recently returned from Ireland, where I spent Christmas with a friend. I very much enjoyed the countryside, in particular Connemara and the Cliffs of Moher. There are tours to these regions of Ireland that leave regularly

from Galway. The bus is the cheapest way to travel around the UK and Ireland that I have found, followed by the train. Hostels are most often the cheapest accommodation one can find, but most cities have a tourist information building where they will be more than happy to find you cheap accommodation. Scholarships and loans really help offset the cost of travel.

I very highly recommend that anyone who has any interest whatsoever in studying abroad do it. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and should not be squandered. Over the past few months that I have been here, I feel as though I have learned more than I did the whole two years I have been at Western Carolina, mostly due to the fact that I have been immersed in a completely different culture. Studying abroad most definitely expands one's horizons and lets us appreciate the enormity of the global village that we live in today.

## Summer opportunity to Study Law and Society Abroad

With International Studies in Law and Society, earn six hours credits, meet new friends and enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime university travel-abroad learning experience. Pack your shorts, travel-journal, iPod and camera, and leave your cell phone, car keys and textbooks at home. Learn in “classrooms” such as Munich, Venice, Lucerne, Rhine Falls, Strasbough and Heidelberg. Stops include the first concentration camp in Germany and the second one to be liberated by U.S. forces.

Travel will cost approximately \$2,600, plus WCU tuition and personal expenses such as lunch, snacks and leisure spending money. The cost includes two meals a day plus flights and other travel, hotels, transfers and tours. The course can be funded through financial aid.

For more information, e-mail lbriggs@wcu.edu or call 828.227.2180. There is an interest sheet on the office of Dr. Lisa Briggs, trip leader, at 418C in the Belk Building.



**WHAT:** Study abroad class CJ 475: “International Studies in Law and Society” led by Dr. Lisa T. Briggs

**DESTINATION:** Germany, Italy and Switzerland

**WHEN:** Two weeks beginning June 14, 2010  
(*departure date may fluctuate by a couple of days*)

**ACADEMIC CREDIT:** Six hours

**COST:** \$2,600, plus tuition and personal expenses

**AVAILABILITY:** Open first to criminal justice/criminology students and elective credit in major, then as general education credit to students outside the department

## Class Overhauled to Include Global Perspective

One component of the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice focus on international matters is delivered through CJ 354: “Comparative Criminal Justice Systems.” This course is being revitalized and slated for regular offering. As citizens of a shrinking world, it is becoming critical that criminal justice personnel and scholars have an awareness of the diverse conceptions of justice and structure of justice systems around the world. Crime as well is an extraordinarily relative phenomenon, its definition dramatically different across space and time. Criminologists must understand this relativity and be familiar with diverse causal factors around the world. Understandings of crime that are viable in one part of the world may be entirely inapplicable in another. The time when knowledge of American or Western issues only surrounding crime and justice constituted an education is past. Students are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities through our department and the university to intellectually become citizens of the world.

### OTHER STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD

**ALEXANDRA CROCCO**, Fall 2009,  
University of Glamorgan, Wales

**TIMOTHY ECKERT**, Fall 2009,  
Lund University, Sweden

**J. MATTHEW HOUSER**, Spring 2010,  
University of Granada, Spain

## New Brown Bag Series Allows Faculty Members to Share Interests

Dr. Fred Hawley, professor of criminal justice & criminology, has organized a Faculty Brown Bag Series to provide faculty the opportunity to share scholarly and teaching interests. It has been planned as an ongoing event, with presentations rotating through the faculty. The inaugural presentation was delivered by adjunct Assistant Professor Doug Dallier, who is placing the finishing touches on his doctoral dissertation at the Florida State University College of Criminology.

Dallier's topic was "Age, Crime and Criminological Theory." He noted that the relationship between age and crime is so widely regarded in the field of criminology that it has been touted by some criminologists as one of the few, if not the only, empirical observations within the discipline tantamount to a "brute social fact." Dallier explained that the conventional criminological wisdom maintains that criminality drastically increases during the teenaged years, until reaching a zenith in the late teenage years, and then gradually

declining with age. A concern shared with colleagues was that interpretations of the relationship between age and crime have been granted the status of de facto truisms – references to a relatively objective social fact that criminologists and practitioners point to as the only way to understand criminal behavior.

For sure, this relationship between age and crime permeates the literature on criminal activities. Yet Dallier cautioned colleagues that what appears most frequently within the published literature represent studies of only the most widespread violations of law, not necessarily those that do the most social harm. In fact, because of the commonplace nature of the bulk of offenses focused on in criminological studies, these criminal activities tend to be the least

socially injurious. He went on to offer a novel reinterpretation of what has been termed the "dark figure of crime," offenses that are unknown or unprocessed by the justice system. Department faculty members were treated to a lively discussion of deeply injurious behaviors that receive scant attention in the literature.

Thanks to Professor Dallier for stimulating the faculty of our department, as he is doing with so many students. His special topics course this Spring semester, "Crimes against Humanity," follows this theme of broadening the focus of criminology and criminal justice to include atrocious human acts that are not accorded the attention warranted.

Our next Brown Bag event will be presented by Dr. Jamie Vaske on March 17 on the topic of gender, genetic risk, and offending.



*Faculty, staff and retirees of the department shared past experiences and future goals at a fall picnic on campus. In the forefront are Professor Bill Hyatt, former department head (1982-2007), and Dr. Duane Davis (1983-2008).*



### SCJA FACULTY MEAL

*Criminology faculty members attend the annual meeting of the Southern Criminal Justice Association in September in Charleston, S.C. Pictured from left are Dr. Lisa Briggs, Kent Briggs, Dr. Karen Mason, Steve Buchanan, Dr. Cyndy Caravelis Hughes, Dr. Steve Brown and Dr. Fred Hawley.*

## FLOOD OF '09

*The emergency and disaster management office of Dr. Laura Myers was inundated with water and mud in early September. Faculty on the first floor were without offices the entire semester.*

## FACULTY SCHOLARLY WORKS

### DR. LISA BRIGGS

Published an article in the November 2009 Journal of Criminal Justice Education titled "D.R.A.M.A: An Extended Conceptualization of Student Anxiety in Criminal Justice Research Methods Courses," co-authored with Steve Brown of our department and Bob Gardner and Robert Davidson at East Tennessee State University. Briggs and Brown also presented a paper to the Southern Criminal Justice Association on Sept. 18 in Charleston, S.C., titled "D.R.A. MA. in Statistics and Research Methods: The Role of the Community College." The pair also presented a paper to the American Society of Criminology on Nov. 5 in Philadelphia titled "Drama in Research Methods & Statistics: Pedagogical Issues."

### DR. STEVE BROWN

In addition to co-authoring and presenting papers with Briggs (above), Brown also presented a paper titled "Teaching the History of the Discipline to Undergraduates in Criminal Justice: Back to the 1960s" to the Southern Criminal Justice Association on Sept. 17 in Charleston, S.C. Brown also chaired a panel titled "Getting the Drama Out of Teaching Statistics & Research Methods: Laughing All the Way" at the American Society of Criminology. The seventh edition of his book "Criminology: Explaining Crime and Its Context" (co-

authored with Finn Esbebsen and Gil Geis) also was completed during the Fall term and will be off the press in the spring.

### DR. CYNDY CARAVELIS HUGHES

Presented a paper to the Southern Criminal Justice Association on Sept. 16 in Charleston, S.C., titled "An Examination of the Racial Threat Hypothesis: Comparing Static and Change Measures of Racial and Ethnic Composition of Place" (co-authored with Ted Chiricos and William Bales). The trio also presented a paper titled "The Designation of Career Offenders: A Multi-level Analysis" to the American Society of Criminology on Nov. 6 in Philadelphia.

### DR. FRED HAWLEY

Led a roundtable discussion at the Southern Criminal Justice Association meeting on Sept. 18 in Charleston, S.C., on the topic of "Southern Culture and Crime." On Nov. 7, at the meeting of the American Criminology Society in Philadelphia, he presented a paper on "Trangressive Agon: Sneaky Thrills in 'Sport' Geocaching."

### DR. KAREN MASON

Presented a paper at the Southern Criminal Justice Association on Sept. 17 in Charleston, S.C., titled "Sensitivity and Skills: Adjustment of White-Collar Offenders to Federal Prison."

### DRS. LAURA AND LARRY MYERS

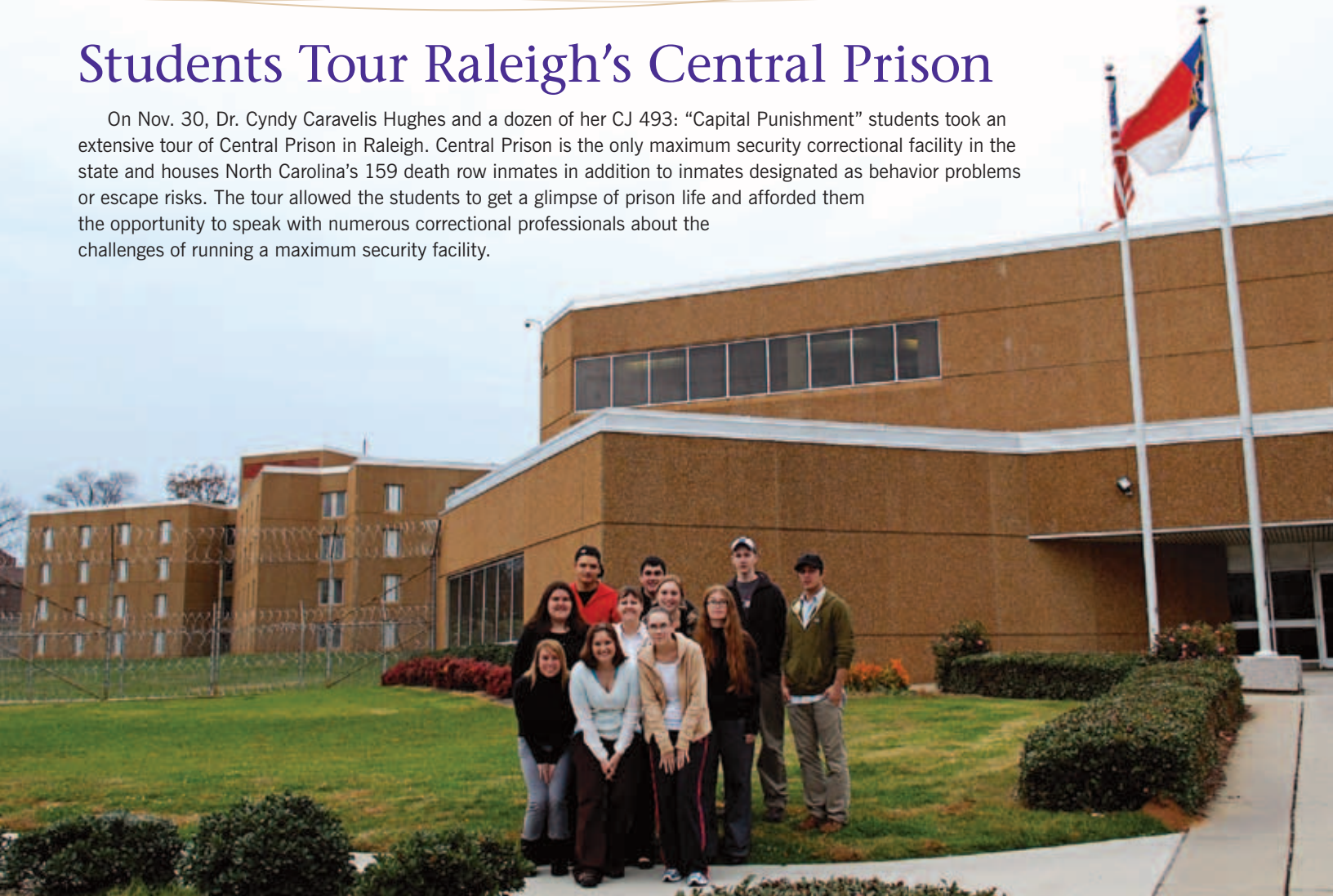
Have prepared an instructors edition and a study guide to accompany their Introduction to Criminal Justice text with Joel Samaha. They also co-authored, with Lorna Grant and Lorraine Samuels, "The Use of Community Networks in Criminal Justice and Emergency Management," a paper presented to the American Society of Criminology on Nov. 6 in Philadelphia.

### DR. JAMIE VASKE

Was first author on article titled "Moderating Effects of DRD2 on Depression," accepted to the Journal of Stress and Health, with Kevin Beaver, John Wright, Danielle Boisvert and Matthew Makarios. She was lead author on another paper (with Krista Gehring) titled "Mechanisms Linking Depression to Delinquency for Males and Females," accepted to Feminist Criminology. Vaske also was an author and co-author on four different papers presented to the American Society of Criminology in Philadelphia between Nov. 4 and 6. Titles of these papers were "Gender, Genetic Risk and Offending," "Integration of Neurobiology into Correctional Treatment," "The Road between Abuse and Offending: A Test of the Pathways Perspective" and "Gender, Self-Control and the Effect of Social Context on Violent Victimization."

## Students Tour Raleigh's Central Prison

On Nov. 30, Dr. Cyndy Caravelis Hughes and a dozen of her CJ 493: "Capital Punishment" students took an extensive tour of Central Prison in Raleigh. Central Prison is the only maximum security correctional facility in the state and houses North Carolina's 159 death row inmates in addition to inmates designated as behavior problems or escape risks. The tour allowed the students to get a glimpse of prison life and afforded them the opportunity to speak with numerous correctional professionals about the challenges of running a maximum security facility.



## Victimology Students Get Real-World Experience with Cold Case Project

Lt. Ross Dillingham of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office visited Dr. Lisa Briggs' victimology class and immersed students in the field.

The Sheriff's Office has several unsolved homicide cases that date back many years. Oftentimes before one case is solved, another murder demands immediate agency attention. Briggs and Dillingham hoped students could provide extra manpower to unsolved cases while gaining direct experience themselves regarding the criminal justice system.

Victimology students reviewed evidence including autopsy reports, crime scene photographs, police reports and witness accounts. They learned of the importance of thorough investigation and the need for complete and accurate police reports. Dillingham was attentive in addressing their questions and allowed students to contribute ideas and theories regarding the cases. Students spent time outside class developing angles, suggesting leads and corresponding with Dillingham.

Importantly, the applied project helped students connect better to the premise that all victims deserve sufficient and effective investigations of their crime. The students also have a much better understanding of the real criminal justice system and not the one that appears on "CSI." Our gratitude goes out to the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, and specifically Lt. Dillingham, for helping our students connect victimology concepts to intricacies and obstacles in application.



## SBI Agents Share Experience, Explain Employment Criteria

On Dec. 8, N.C. State Bureau of Investigation Special Agents Joel Schick and Shannon Ashe (WCU '97) spoke to the Criminal Justice Club about the agency's mission, employment opportunities and their experiences as SBI Special Agents. While the SBI has original jurisdiction over numerous crimes such as drug violations, arson and the protection of state property, the agency also is charged with assisting other state agencies with various investigations. For students interested in employment as an SBI Special Agent, Schick and Ashe both stressed education, motivation and some experience with local law enforcement agencies.

## Victimology Students Become Certified "Stewards of Children"

Students in Dr. Lisa Briggs' victimology class were recently certified in the Stewards of Children Training Program. The program, developed by Darkness to Light Inc., teaches adults how to protect children from sexual abuse. It is designed to show adults what they can do to stop abuse from happening in the first place, and if it has happened, how to respond in a helpful way.

Mountain Youth Resources (MYR), a nonprofit agency serving youth and families in Western North Carolina, is now offering the Stewards of Children training.

Statistics indicate one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the age of 18. It is estimated that there are 35 million adult survivors of child sexual abuse in the United States.

For opportunities to help, contact Margie Allison at Mountain Youth Resources at 828.586.8958, ext. 312. Go to [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org) for more information about the issue and to learn about ways to help.

## Department Prepares for Overhaul with New Class Offerings

Ever find yourself saying, "What can I take this semester?" Problem solved! Students at WCU are finding an amazing array of topics in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice.

Preparing for an exciting curriculum overhaul to coincide with the department's Quality Enhancement Plan initiative, the department is experimentally addressing many topics. These changes reflect the cutting edge of the discipline nationally, preparing WCU graduates to excel in the field. Pending these curriculum changes, the special topics modality has been working overtime. To wit, the Fall term included "Biosocial Criminology," "Capital Punishment" and "White Collar Crime." The Spring semester will feature "Crimes against Humanity" along with such criminological staples as "Theories of Crime," "Victimology," "Drugs and Society," "Violence in American Society" and "Juvenile Justice and Delinquency."

Classes in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice are all about diverse choices and critical issues. Take your pick!



## VISITING SCHOLAR LECTURE

*Stimulating and controversial issues are frequently examined in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice.*

# The Emergency and Disaster Management Program Creates a Disaster Response Exercise in Second Life

By Carlie Merritt Program Director



from left: The Second Life virtual emergency operations center. Faculty directing students in an “Emergency Exercise Design and Evaluation” participate in a virtual disaster exercise.

“On the afternoon of Nov. 15, 2009, at 1:45 p.m., an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale occurred in the area of Central City, in Liberty County, Columbia. Preliminary assessments indicate that the tremor caused damage to structures and roadways in the city.”

This was the first prompt among many that students in EDM 448: “Emergency Exercise Design and Evaluation” received during a 2.5-hour functional disaster exercise. Each student played a role in an emergency operations center, such as a city emergency manager, transportation support person, governor’s representative and public information officer. Individually and as a group, they responded to the earthquake by directing assistance for the injured, setting up shelters, securing food and water, and communicating disaster information, among other tasks. The unique aspect of this exercise was that the students from around the state and country were participating from the comfort of their own homes.

The emergency operations center is located on a virtual world called Second

Life. Students created virtual representatives of themselves and used these “avatars” to navigate Catamount Island, a virtual space procured by Western Carolina University for simulation projects. With a computer, Internet access and a headset, students were able to interact with their classmates and faculty. Students generally noted that the virtual environment added to the realism of the situation. “For one who does not play video games, this was an exciting experience to use new and evolving technology,” said one student. Others remarked that, “Moving around in that environment gives you a kind of real life feeling,” and “The EOC looked realistic and contained many things that a typical EOC would have.”

In addition to the Second Life environment, students accessed an emergency data wiki (an online collaboration tool) to obtain information on the fictitious county’s basic emergency management plan. During the exercise, the wiki allowed students to determine their tasks, locate resources to address the disaster and review critical infrastructure, as indicated

*“I was amazed at what could be done in a virtual world. What an incredible learning opportunity for our students. Our EDM faculty should be praised for their innovative and creative use of technology to support student learning.”*

*Dean Linda Stanford,  
following observation of the drill*

on maps and diagrams. The emergency data wiki also allowed students to journal their activities as they made decisions and addressed response issues. The wiki was greatly enhanced by the donation of virtual community information from the Emergency Management Institute, a support institution for the Federal Emergency Management Agency that provides policy analysis and

training. With this depth of information, the EDM program at WCU can create an endless variety of disaster simulations as well as provide students with examples of data and forms typically used by the emergency management field.

Professor Robert Berry, who teaches the EDM 448 class, collaborated with Professor Carlie Merritt, coordinator of the online EDM program, to design the exercise. Berry's goal for the exercise was to provide students with "the actual experience of participating in an emergency response as part of an EOC team, gathering information, confirming/verifying facts, making decisions, coordinating resources, implementing communications and related duties and responsibilities." He observed that the students reacted to the emergency much as one would expect a group to react to a disaster situation: at first with uncertainty and then with increasing confidence and responsiveness. One student remarked in her reflection paper, "It was evident that some students were not comfortable with their positions and were unclear what needed to be done. This can also happen in a real event and provided a good learning experience for all students." Overall, students indicated that the experience was beneficial and made constructive suggestions for future simulations.

Encouraging role-playing in a simulated disaster response is one example of how the EDM program engages students so that they will have a better understanding of the responsibilities in the emergency management field. The program also provides internship placements and opportunities to participate in projects related to the field. These engagement alternatives are an integral part of the WCU Quality Enhancement Plan, an initiative designed to "help students create connections between what they learn inside and outside of the classroom and to afford faculty, staff, and students more opportunities to collaborate."

Additional information on the Emergency and Disaster Management Program can be found at [www.wcu.edu/5699.asp](http://www.wcu.edu/5699.asp).

## Department Explores Possibility of Offering Advanced Degree

Interested in a master's degree in criminal justice? A graduate feasibility study is under way in the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice, and a committee has been convened and charged with the possibility of creating a master's degree. There are several steps that are involved in getting formal approval. The first is to assess community, agency, alumni and current student interest.

Initially, we will focus attention on a residential masters program, with a caveat to explore distance education once the residential program has been established. The ultimate goal would be to channel our own WCU students and alumni into the program and continue with a wider recruitment base in the future. We believe the need exists to service our area, career professionals and the student population with the opportunity of attending graduate school via Western Carolina University rather than having to travel to graduate programs that are farther away.

We have included the link to an interest survey. Please take a moment to give us your feedback.

### TAKE THE SURVEY

We are eager to hear from you. Find the criminal justice master's degree survey at [wcu.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV\\_ONXBQmEhJ8CSnIM&SVID=Prod](http://wcu.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_ONXBQmEhJ8CSnIM&SVID=Prod). If you would like this link emailed to you, or you have comments or questions, contact Dr. Lisa T Briggs at [lbriggs@email.wcu.edu](mailto:lbriggs@email.wcu.edu) or 828-227-2180. Hard copies of the survey also are available.

## FAREWELL TO...

**DR. RON HUNTER**, who resigned from Western Carolina University on Jan. 4, 2010, to accept a position at Georgia Gwinnett College in Lawrenceville, just northeast of Atlanta. That location places him only 25 miles from he and wife Vi's daughter and two granddaughters. We wish them the best in their new endeavors. Hunter began at WCU in 2004, serving two years as department head and one year as interim associate dean of the college.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

**DR. KAREN MASON**, was tenured this academic year and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. Mason earned her doctorate in sociology at the University of Tennessee in 1999 and taught at Washington State University prior to joining the WCU faculty in 2005. Mason teaches our "Controversies in Criminal Justice" for the liberal studies component, corrections courses and a course in white-collar crime – also one of her research focuses. She has been the faculty sponsor for the Student Association of Criminal Justice Affairs for several years and currently is developing a new course titled "Issues in Correctional Treatment."

## GOT FEEDBACK?

The Carolina Criminologist is edited by:

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We welcome your thoughts and comments.



Faculty of the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice gathered for a Holiday luncheon in December.

## Make a Difference; Strengthen Criminal Justice Education

If you are in a position to donate to the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice, please consider doing so. Challenging economic times have impacted the state of North Carolina, including higher education, quite significantly. This would be an extremely helpful time for alumni and other supporters to pledge donations. Your monetary support will help us continue to pursue our mission and activities such as those reported in this newsletter.

To discuss your ideas regarding donations, please contact:  
**Dr. Steve Brown**  
828.227.2174  
browns@wcu.edu.

### MAKE YOUR GIFT

When making Gifts for the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice by check note on the memo line the purpose of the gift "for Criminology & Criminal Justice Dept."

Make checks payable to:  
The Western Carolina University Foundation

Mail to:  
Western Carolina University Foundation  
201 HF Robinson  
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Enclosed is my check in the amount of

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_