

What is in a Name? Name Changes Reflect a Multitude of Department Activities

Change is in the air on the campus of Western Carolina University. That climate of change was reflected in the October 1 unveiling of our name as the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice. This expanded identity comes on the heels of a reconceptualization of the Distance Education Bachelor of Science degree in Emergency and Disaster Management. A lot of exciting changes are in the works to deliver quality academic programs across the diverse fields of criminology & criminal justice, as well as the preparation of professionals to steer government preparedness for disasters.

Stepping into a dynamic academic environment located in such idyllic mountain beauty is what lured me to Western Carolina University. While I had visited the campus on several occasions and was awed by the serene setting, it was the widespread commitment to pursue new heights that convinced me that I wanted to be part of this university experience. The Dean of our College, Dr. Linda Seestedt-Stanford, routinely uses the phrase that, at WCU, "It is a new world." Similarly, on my first visit, Provost Kyle Carter expressed a firm commitment to elevating academic rigor. Chancellor Bardo's vision of growth for the pursuit of lofty goals fuels this enthusiasm. This beautiful campus has evolved into a truly comprehensive university. In step with this, the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice has become a quite diverse academic unit with

academic programs studying a wide range of scholarly, intellectual and policy issues.

So why the name changes? And, indeed, what do they signify? First of all, we recognized a practical need to be sure that our department and program names clearly communicate to our constituencies the scope of our academic programs. We want to be sure, for example, that prospective students searching for programs in criminology and criminal justice would recognize that these are the core disciplines of our department. Students in North Carolina, and beyond, contemplating pursuit of a baccalaureate degree in these fields must be able to quickly see that Western Carolina University offers a conventional social science degree in criminology and criminal justice that reflects the mainstream of those academic disciplines. Likewise, prospective employers of our students need to understand that our course of study provides graduates with the core preparation associated with contemporary criminology degree programs. Alumni also benefit from a name that clearly communicates the academic preparation that they have received. Colleagues at other academic institutions and those serving in government and private agencies will also respond more positively to our broadened and more conventional identity.

Continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Student Spotlight	2
Alumni Spotlight	2
Faculty Honored	4
New Faculty	4
Study Abroad	4
A Look at CJ Students	5
Faculty in the News	6

Lecturers Signify Diversity for Majors

Five guest lecturers visited Western Carolina during the first half of the Fall semester, providing Criminology courses a diverse outlook of the field. Joseph Barringer, Megan Leshak, Gary Yourosky, Jessica Taylor, and Sheree Poling spoke on an array of topics.

Megan Leshak, a youth program director in North Carolina, spoke and fielded questions in Dr. Hawley's Juvenile Justice course. Ms. Leshak spoke with students about juvenile mediation programs in the state and the effectiveness of these programs.

Mr. Joseph Barringer, an agent with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a division of Homeland Security, joined Professor Moore's Homeland Security class detailing job opportunities with the Federal government. Mr. Barringer provided detailed information on the growth of the department, job requirements, and provided real life scenarios for the students. Barringer is also a graduate of Western Carolina with a degree in Criminal Justice.

Continued on page 2



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Wahnetah "Sissy" Oocumma

The Criminology Department spotlights Wahnetah "Sissy" Oocumma as the outstanding student for this fall edition. Sissy is currently holding a 3.80 GPA as a full-time student with the department. The hard work does not end with school. Ms. Oocumma is currently employed as a full-time patrol officer with Cherokee Indian Police Department and is married with two children.

Sissy is a recent graduate of the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) program and attributes her success with time management to her wonderful family, the aid of several professors, and a great support staff. Sissy's motto, "the greatest thing in life is doing what others said you couldn't," has fueled her success here at Western.

Besides her duties as a police officer, and her success in all avenues of higher education, Sissy says her greatest accomplishment is "being a mother and a role model for my children." She said the help of her family and several professors, including Dr. Briggs, Dr. Hawley, and Professor Knight, have aided in her success and she credits her success to everybody who has helped her along the way.

The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice would like to congratulate Ms. Oocumma for her hard work and exemplary performance as a student, mother, and active member of her community.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Jarrett Wishon

The Criminology Department would like to spotlight Alum Jarrett Wishon and congratulate Mr. Wishon for his success after graduation. Jarrett is a 2005 graduate of the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice and a member of the Southern Conference All Academic Team all four years while a member of the Catamount football program.

Mr. Wishon currently works with the Charlotte Police Department and is assigned to the Mission Focus Team. The primary mission of the focus team is to curb felony crime in North East Charlotte through a proactive policing style. Jarrett's team is involved with active surveillance and undercover work, narcotics investigations, serving warrants, and a series of other related tasks. Wishon compliments the CMPD by saying "it is the best department in law enforcement this state has to offer." Jarrett credits the hard work of his football coach, and especially Dr. Briggs, for their determination in helping their players and students succeed while at WCU. He would like to add, that his favorite memory at WCU was, "Beating Appalachian State in football."

Charlotte PD is actively hiring, and information about employment can be obtained on the web. The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice would like to congratulate Mr. Wishon for his hard work while at WCU and his work in the community of Charlotte.



Lecturers Signify Diversity *(continued from page 1)*

Jessica Taylor, an officer with the Charleston, SC police department delivered a presentation on females in law enforcement, job requirements, and fielded questions from students in Dr. Bell's senior seminar course. She also discussed job opportunities for interested students.

Gary Yourofsky, an animal rights activist,

delivered a thought-provoking view on speciesism in Dr. Briggs' victimology course. Mr. Yourofsky has delivered this debate on victimization of animals at Florida, Georgia Tech, and Kent State.

Sheree Poling of the Macon County Detention Center spoke about special needs inmates, inmates with illegal status, day-

to-day operations in the jail, and challenges facing female corrections officers in Dr. Mason's Institutional Corrections course.

The Department thanks these speakers and welcomes all interested students to attend these lectures in the future.

What is in a Name Change? *(continued from page 1)*

Perhaps even more important than the practical value of communicating the substance of our programs is the symbolic dividends derived from the renaming. The expanded and more current identity will serve to rally faculty around the vision of change that permeates WCU. Criminology and Criminal Justice are relatively young academic disciplines that are rapidly evolving. By realigning the department with widespread academic nomenclature, we are positioning ourselves to meet the challenge of keeping current with the continuous evolution of the field.

The symbolism of this update also generates excitement among faculty and students because it demonstrates that we appreciate the breadth of the field and want to be conversant across the entire criminological domain. There are few academic disciplines whose breadth extends so far beyond the common perception of lay persons. A sense of that diversity can be quickly grasped by reviewing one of the most often cited definitions of the term “criminology” offered by one of the giants in the history of the field. Edwin Sutherland, nearly three-quarters of a century ago, defined criminology as the study of “the processes of making laws, breaking laws, and reacting towards the breaking of laws.” Our curriculum delves deeply into all three dimensions of this definition.

We offer numerous courses examining various aspects of the content and origins of laws. Students are exposed not only to the content of criminal and regulatory law, but various perspectives on how the law is shaped. Criminology demands an appreciation of the relativity of law; the fact that human behavioral expectations are not static, but vary across time and space. Inherent in criminology is recognition that structural forces, for better or for worse, shape the content of the law.

The middle part of Sutherland’s definition, understanding why people violate laws, is widely viewed as the centerpiece of the criminological enterprise. In this vein, our curriculum repeatedly exposes students to a tremendous array of theoretical explanations for crime. The fact that this is such a complex question, with so many competing explanations for different types of crime and people, is what makes the discipline intrinsically exciting! Everyone has opinions about this, but criminologists have well-tested theories that give us a continually expanding body of scientific knowledge.

Sutherland’s third dimension of criminology justifies the baccalaureate degree in “criminal justice” awarded by the department and compelled us to extend our department title to incorporate the term. It is through the activities of the criminal justice system that our society formally responds to law breaking. We do this through a system comprised of law enforcement, courts and corrections. As a department, we make certain that our students study this entire system.

But, we go well beyond Sutherland’s revered definition of criminology. Since the horrific national experience on 9/11 and the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, our country has resolved to be better prepared for threats to our national security and to the havoc of natural disasters. Our department has stepped up to the plate to develop a baccalaureate degree in Emergency and Disaster Management to prepare professionals to plan responses for such critical events. We are on the cutting edge in this emerging discipline and are meeting important needs. While this is not criminology or criminal justice per se, there is a need for professional training in this realm, and it is, after all, our police that have traditionally stepped in to contend with crises of all sorts. Thus there is a natural link between criminology, criminal justice, homeland security and emergency and disaster management.

So what is in our name? Breadth and diversity; we are a social science field charged with the task of coming to understand deeply complex human behaviors and to recommend policies on those basis. Why do people victimize others in so many ways? Why does our culture sometimes condemn persons who have never brought significant harm to others as “criminals” while at other times allowing deadly behaviors to occur, but remain outside the reach of the law? How can we prevent persons from becoming victims of crime? How can we help those who prey upon fellow human beings to become conforming members of society? How can we help to restore victims of crime? What, indeed, is a “just” society? The questions that comprise the fields of criminology and criminal justice are many and deeply profound. It is the perfect academic setting for the curious mind and the passionate concerns of those desirous of a just society.



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Emergency & Disaster Management Professor Honored



Emergency & Disaster Management professor Robert "Bob" Berry was honored with a "Lifetime Certification" as an Emergency Manager earlier this year. This award has been bestowed on only 33 members of the emergency management community worldwide. Professor Berry began his official career in emergency management in 1986 as a planning coordinator with the Nevada State Division of Emergency Management (NDEM) in Carson City, Nevada. He worked with NDEM for over 17 years in several capacities. During his tenure with NDEM, Berry served as the State Planning Coordinator, Senior Planner, Operations Duty Officer, and Grants Coordinator.

Over the years he has coordinated emergency exercises for Nevada jurisdic-

tions, instructed courses in several areas of emergency planning, and was certified as an emergency manager in 1997. He retired from NDEM (in 2003) and accepted a position with the newly formed Emergency Management degree program at Western Carolina University. The initial professor of the EM degree, professor Berry initiated, created, and taught all residential and online courses. He looks forward to a promising future for the alumni and for those currently in the program. The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice would like to congratulate Professor Berry for "earning" the Lifetime Certified Emergency Manager designation on June 20th of 2008.

Three New Faculty Members Join Department

Three new faculty members joined The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice this fall. Keith Bell, Stephen Brown, and David Moore come to us from various backgrounds.

Keith Bell joins the department from Marshall University in West Virginia. He is a graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania with his Ph.D. in criminal justice. He is teaching Criminal Courts, Research Methods, and Senior Seminar this semester. His research interests are in the areas of victimology and social learning theory. Dr. Bell can be found in Belk 112.

Stephen Brown joins the department from East Tennessee State University. He served as the chair of the department and director of honors-in-discipline at ETSU. He comes to WCU as the department head of the Criminology & Criminal Justice Department. He currently teaches Theory. His research interests include criminological theory, quantitative statistical analysis, and issues in criminal justice education. Dr. Brown can be found in Belk 413-B.

David Moore joins the program from a completely different background. Professor Moore is recently retired from a federal job

that included over 30 years of law enforcement experience. Professor Moore began his career with the Orange County Sheriffs Department; and after ten years of experience, took a job as a special agent with the FBI. His duties included foreign counter-intelligence and criminal investigations, among other things. He later was transferred to New York City to track Russian KGB agent activity in Manhattan. A move to the Department of Treasury brought David to Orlando; and later, he was promoted to Weapons of Mass Destruction National Program Manager in Washington DC. His work with the FBI and several agencies brought him to Charlotte for a two-year stint; and upon his retirement, he and his wife settled nearby. Professor Moore currently teaches Judicial Process and Homeland Security. He is found in Belk 105A.

The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice would like to welcome the three new members to our family. We encourage our students to introduce yourselves and meet the new faculty.

Criminology Department Graduates Six From BLET Program

The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice would like to congratulate the following students for completing the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) program this past summer. The program is designed to prepare individuals with physical and cognitive skills needed in law enforcement. The students are Ryan Hayes, John Williams, Wahnetah Oocumma, Ashley Cromer, DJ Robinson and Joey Glenn.


Summer School Opportunity: Study Abroad

LISA BRIGGS

Visit Spain, Italy and Greece in June 2009, and capture history by standing at the birthplace of democracy in Athens, Greece. Climb the steps of the Acropolis, and envision a time when votes were cast in stone. Learn about ancient and modern art, culture, democracy, and early prisoner treatment. With International Studies in Law and Justice earn 6 credit hours, meet new friends, and enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime university travel-abroad learning experience. This EF Tours 12-day trip costs approximately \$3300, plus tuition (Distance Ed is about \$450 for summer school) and can be funded through your financial aid. All flights, hotels, transfers, boat cruising between countries, tours, and 2 meals-a-day are included. Pack your shorts, travel journal, i-pod, and camera; leave your cell phone, car keys, and textbooks at home as you learn in "classrooms" like the Parthenon and Duomo. For information, email lbriggs@wcu.edu or call WCU x2180. A sheet of interest is available at Dr. Briggs' office Belk 418c. (Sign up to learn more; meeting soon). Please be alert for upcoming meeting times posted throughout campus.

Emergency Management Announces It's

SHIRT SALE



A variety of shirt brands, sizes, and colors are available through Simply T's. Stenciled T-shirts are \$15, embroidered polo's range from \$20-\$26, plus tax. Orders can be placed by calling Simply T's at 828-293-3112. The stenciled T-shirts and embroidered polo shirts bear the Emergency Management logo found at the homepage. If you have further questions contact Simply T's and inquire about "Emergency Management Logo Shirts" or call the department.

ORDER AT 828-293-3112

FACULTY IN THE NEWS

LISA BRIGGS

Presented two papers at the Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA) meeting held in New Orleans in October. The first was entitled: "Physical Fitness Levels and its Relationships to Problem Behavior." The second, "Another Thin Blue Line – When Vigilance Compromises the System: A Review of Minor Offense Citations and Misdemeanor Court Proceedings," was co-authored with Cynthia Brown of Central Florida University. In addition, Dr. Briggs has recently published a book entitled "Reading Deficiency and Delinquency," V.D.M. Verlag, Dr. Mueller, E.K.

STEPHEN BROWN

Presented a paper in October at the Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA) Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The paper was entitled: "Teaching Statistics in Criminology & Criminal Justice: Popular Culture Pedagogy." Dr. Brown also presented at the American Society of Criminology (ASC) November 12th in St. Louis, Missouri, a paper entitled: "Teaching Statistics to Social Science Students: Stats From The Three Stooges." Both papers were co-authored with Robert Davidson and Bob Gardner of East Tennessee State University. Dr. Brown was also invited to attend a lecture series as a special guest at the University of Maryland on October 17th. At this event, he was recognized as an honored graduate of the second Ph.D. class of the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice in 1979.

RONALD HUNTER

Presented a paper entitled: "A Proposal for a Diplomat in Justice Studies" at the SCJA conference in New Orleans. In addition, Dr. Hunter has published "Why We Need Certification Standards in Criminal Justice Education and What the Impacts Will Be: A Response to the Concerns of JDs" in the Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 19, 2, 193-204. Dr. Hunter also represented ACJS at the World Congress of Criminology in Barcelona, Spain. The meeting included approximately 1000 delegates and presenters from numerous nations and organizations around the world.

LAURA MYERS

Dr. Laura Myers presented a paper entitled "Ethics and Cultural Diversity in Professional Decision-Making" at the USDA Compliance Officer Conference in College Station, Texas, during November. She also presented "Creating a Bias-Free Court" at the Texas Court Administrators Conference in San Antonio, Texas. She presented two papers, both co-authored with L.J. Myers and L. Grant, at the 2008 ASC meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, in November. The first paper was "Homeland Security Response and the Organizational Behavior of the First Responder Community." The second presentation was "The Utility of Student Evaluations: Proposed Changes."

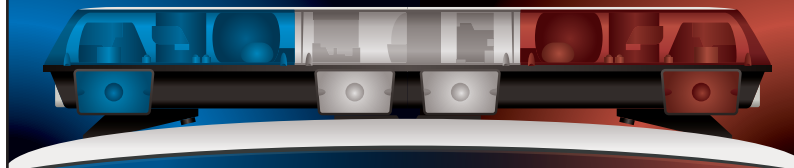
KAREN MASON

Is the co-author of "Youth Gang Violence: Beyond the 49th Parallel." *Blueline: Canada's National Law Enforcement Magazine* August/September 16-18. The article details the perceptions and effectiveness of gang education programs. Dr. Mason has two forthcoming book chapters concerning violence in juvenile institutions. These include: "Violence in Juvenile Correctional Institutions." In R. Ruddell and N.E. Fearn (eds.) *Understanding Correctional Violence*, 19-38. Richmond, KY: Newgate Press and "Violence: Prevalence and Causes." In R. Ruddell & M.O. Thomas (eds.) *Juvenile Corrections*. Richmond, KY: Newgate Press.

LARRY MYERS

Dr. Myers, in collaboration with Dr. Laura Myers, serves as the principal investigator for the Southeast Region Research Initiative (SERRI) regional disaster planning project. He also serves as a consultant to the telecommunications industry improving community safety. The system is currently used by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to distribute AMBER Alerts to wireless consumers. This project has generated several presentations and publications for the fall. Slated for the Contingency Planning Association of the Carolinas Annual Symposium in November are, "The Development of a Private Sector Resource Network for Disaster Response" and "A Regional Planning Process for Communities." Accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of WCU Research is "A Regional Planning Model for Enhancing Community Collaborations."

CALLING ALL ALUMNI



SEND US YOUR EMAIL

Please contact Keith Bell (editor of the newsletter) with any updated information you may want provided in upcoming editions. We are currently in the process of updating our mailing/contact lists for departmental alumni and would love to hear from you.

Dr. Keith Bell
828.227.2163 | keithbell@wcu.edu

We are waiting to hear from you!

The Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice extends a greeting to all current students and alumni of Western Carolina University. We would like to extend the opportunity to give back to the criminology department to help fund existing scholarships, special initiatives, and programs funded by your department. If you would like to give, please return the form below to the address provided.

Thank you!

YES | I would like to make a donation to the Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

MAKING GIFTS BY CHECK

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 HFR Administration Building
Cullowhee, NC 28723

Enclosed is my check in the amount of

\$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Criminal Justice Students Promote Victim Awareness

Dr. Briggs' students promote awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault during the fall semester by wearing red shirts and preparing handouts specific to on-campus violence and assault.



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