In February, a capacity crowd of state and local policy makers, researchers and practitioners attended the second annual Criminal Justice Forum at Portland State. This year’s theme — Containing Crime and Prison Costs: A Look at Innovative Solutions — was geared toward helping to identify possible strategies for responding to the fiscal crisis in Oregon, both at the state and local level.

This year’s featured speaker was Jack Horowitz of The Pew Charitable Trusts. As a project manager within Pew’s Public Safety Performance Project, Mr. Horowitz works with states with the goal of advancing fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs. Mr. Horowitz presented a range of examples of cost-conscious criminal justice strategies that have been employed around the country. A key theme of his presentation was that “prisons cost a lot of money. You need to be sure that you look at what you are getting in return for that big tax payer investment.” In these tight fiscal times, he said “states need to be looking at whether they are using the most cost effective strategies for controlling crime. You can even get more crime control bang for the buck by using non-prison or less-prison alternatives for some kinds of offenders.” He went on to share research results illustrating some of these crime- and cost-containing strategies.

The topic and dates for the next Criminal Justice Forum will be announced by Fall 2010. Requests for an invitation and suggestions for future topics and speakers can be sent to Kathy Perrin in the CCJ Division at (503) 725-4014, or online at perrin@pdx.edu. The Forum was jointly sponsored by the CCJ Division, its online degree program, Criminology and Criminal Justice Online, and the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government.

CJPRI Partnership Offers Law Enforcement Training to Address Profiling

Over the past year, CJPRI work in the area of racial profiling and police training has continued to grow. In 2008, CJPRI formed a partnership with the Law Enforcement Contacts Policy and Data Review Committee (LECC) and the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to help address racial profiling issues in Oregon. The centerpiece of the effort is a unique, interactive training called Tactical Ethics: Perspectives on Profiling. The curriculum was designed by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Museum of Tolerance and is delivered by experienced Oregon law enforcement professionals.

The training addresses profiling-related issues in the context of the real-life scenarios that law enforcement officers face. Its goal is to help trainees identify ways to effectively manage a variety of ethical dilemmas that arise in day-to-day police work. In particular, the training focuses on how to avoid bias in making and handling traffic stops – a setting that is often rife with difficulty for law enforcement.

To date, CJPRI has trained over 900 Oregon law enforcement professionals, already covering personnel from most of the law enforcement agencies in the state. The demand continues to grow, both for first-time and for follow up trainings.

Participant feedback about the value of the experience has been resoundingly positive. “We’ve been really pleased with the response to the training,” says Emma Covelli who serves as key CJPRI staff on the project. “We are in the process of conducting a more thorough evaluation of the training to measure the actual impact it has on the law enforcement personnel who participate.”

To continue to improve on the experience, fourteen members of the training team traveled to Los Angeles to expand their knowledge of racial profiling and other ethical issues, sharpen their facilitation skills to deepen training classroom discussions, and work towards developing a refined curriculum for follow up trainings in Oregon. This opportunity will help to enhance the long term sustainability of this effort for Oregon law enforcement.

CJPRI operates these trainings as a part of their work with the LECC under a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration grant that is dedicated to eliminating racial profiling in law enforcement. CJPRI Director Brian Renauer has served as the key staff person for the LECC since 2006. As well as providing this training effort to Oregon law enforcement, Dr. Renauer also leads traffic stop data analysis efforts, public perceptions of law enforcement surveys, and community relations efforts pertaining to this issue.

For more information about the LECC or this training effort, please contact Dr. Brian Renauer at (503) 725-8090, or online at renauer@pdx.edu.
Developing New Tools to Fight Juvenile Sex Trafficking

Like many criminology undergraduate students, Kelli Russell was very interested in crime control courses but decidedly unexcited about enrolling in the required research methodology course. After a few weeks in Dr. Jody Sundt’s research methods class, however, she changed her mind. As a juvenile custody officer in Clark County, Washington, Russell began to see how research skills she was learning in class could help address a significant problem she saw every day.

Russell was painfully aware that many young girls she supervised in juvenile detention were not defiant lawbreakers. Instead, they were victims of predatory adults, girls in need of protection and services, rather than incarceration. Realizing that research could make a difference, Russell approached Dr. Emily Salisbury—CCJ’s expert on gender-based correctional risk assessment—with an idea. Thus, the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Intervention Project was born.

Initially, Russell and Salisbury worked to develop an objective assessment tool that could be used to identify sex trafficking victims among youths in custody. The two collaborated on building a tool that was solidly grounded in research and prioritized the feasibility of using the tool in a real-world juvenile detention setting. Once trafficking victims were identified using the tool, the intervention plans to match them with appropriate services and extra protection upon release from custody.

Several early successes identifying trafficked girls, including one leading to the arrest of an adult trafficker, helped build support for the intervention project. Salisbury’s guidance and research expertise, coupled with Russell’s practitioner experience and tireless advocacy, has continued to build local momentum for the project. Of the inquiries she’s received about the assessment tool, Salisbury says, “We’re really pleased that other jurisdictions are interested in the possibility of adapting the tool, but I want to complete our evaluation before we begin distributing it around the country.”

In February, Salisbury and Russell travelled to San Diego, California, to present the tool and research strategy at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. The planned evaluation is currently under way and is expected to be complete in 2011.

Meanwhile, Kelli Russell received her well-earned bachelor’s degree in June and will begin CCJ’s graduate program this fall. She and Salisbury plan to continue their collaboration throughout her graduate studies.

Tapping Views on Crime-Related Cost Saving Strategies

How do Oegonians feel about cost-reducing strategies in criminal justice? To shed some light on this issue, CJPRI is launching a statewide survey to directly investigate these views, developing a clearer picture for policy makers about where Oregonians stand on issues of criminal justice.

The survey is a collaborative effort of the CQJ faculty and is being led by Dr. Brian Renauer and Dr. Jody Sundt, both of whom have experience executing public surveys in Oregon and around the country. “Our goal is to not only understand how Oregonians feel about criminal justice issues,” explained Dr. Renauer, “but understand key factors that distinguish public opinion differences.”

The telephone survey will include a representative sample of Oregon adults by geographic region, gender, and race/ethnicity. The survey will include questions about views on a variety of criminal justice and crime prevention strategies, as well as some questions about victimization experiences and fear. “We’re using some standard questions so we can compare Oregon to other states,” said Dr. Sundt, “but we’re also asking about specific Oregon policies and issues.”

The survey launch is planned during the summer months, with results released in Fall 2010. CJPRI hopes to repeat the survey on an annual basis to watch for changes in public sentiments over time. Future surveys would also be supplemented with questions on new policy-relevant issues as they emerge.

Distinguished Scholar Joins CJPRI As Senior Research Fellow

This academic year, CJPRI proudly welcomed Dr. Meda Chesney-Lind as its new Senior Research Fellow through a courtesy appointment to PSU. This formal affiliation follows her participation in last year’s Criminal Justice Forum, sponsored by CJPRI and Criminology and Criminal Justice Sciences “for outstanding contributions to criminal justice research.” Dr. Chesney-Lind was recently appointed to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency for “outstanding contributions to the field of criminology,” and Michael J. Hindelang Award for the most Outstanding Scholarship to Criminology from the American Society of Criminology for her book Girls, Delinquency and Juvenile Justice.

Next Generation Researchers Receive Impressive Award

In September, three CCJ graduate students received an impressive award for a collaborative research study they presented at a large, international research conference. The quality of their work was singled out from among a large number of student research projects, including those submitted by doctoral candidates.

Building on a collaborative project they started in Dr. Kris Henning’s research methods course, Theresa Marchetti, Shafina Fazal, and Ryan Arnold presented their work entitled, “Family Violence and Alcohol Availability: A Neighborhood Level Analysis,” at the 14th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma in September in San Diego, California.

During an award ceremony attended by about 1,000 conference participants, the three CCJ scholars-in-training received the B.B. Robbie Rossman Annual Memorial Student Research Award. The award was named to honor the contribution of Dr. Rossman, who “exemplified dedication, honesty, and the pursuit of knowledge through research and clinical experience. She was a true scientist/practitioner, and she fostered cooperation and collaboration. This award encourages these qualities by recognizing outstanding research that will be the future cornerstone in helping children exposed to family violence.”

Kudos Corner

In February, at the invitation of Pew Charitable Trusts, Judy Salisbury travelled to Washington, D.C., to serve on a small panel of national experts brought together to advise the Prison Chaplaincy Project, an initiative of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

In May, two studies published by Emily Salisbury achieved the rare distinction of being simultaneously ranked among the 50 Most Read articles published by two different journals, Crime & Delinquency and Criminal Justice and Behavior.

In August, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention supplemented and extended the National Safe Start Evaluation, co-lead by Laura Hickman with colleagues at the RAND Corporation. The six-year, nearly $6 million effort will release final results in 2011.

In September, Kris Henning was one of only a few attendees invited to participate in the keynote panel, delivering an all-conference address at the 14th International Conference on Family Violence, San Diego, California. His presentation focused on tools for assessing risk of repeat intimate partner violence.

In September, Brian Renauer, Kris Henning and Emma Covelli released a much-anticipated report describing findings from a multi-year analysis of Portland Police Bureau traffic stop and search data.
What’s in Print


What’s Underway

The CCJ faculty continue to be busy working on a variety of policy-relevant research projects that span local, state, and national settings. Aside from the work already featured, here is a sampling of other ongoing studies.

At the Western Criminal Justice Association conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, Jody Sundt discussed the development of content knowledge in the context of recidivism.

In Tempe, Arizona, Laura Hickman delivered an invited address on methodological challenges to a National Science Foundation–sponsored workshop entitled “Social Science Research on Immigration: The Role of Transnational Migration, Communities and Policy.”

At the Western Society of Criminology meetings in Honolulu, Hawaii, Catherine Ginsburg and Emily Salisbury discussed promising correctional rehabilitative strategies for forensic psychiatric patients.

In San Diego, Kris Henning delivered three presentations at the 14th International Conference on Family Violence. His keynote panel address focused on the development of effective risk assessment tools for intimate partner violence. In related presentations, he discussed characteristics and recidivism patterns for women arrested for intimate partner violence and the validation of an automated risk assessment tool for use by law enforcement.


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Research in Focus: Controlling Corporate Crime

With all the recent headlines about pervasive mortgage and financial fraud and death and destruction caused by corporate-owned oil rigs and coal mines, Dr. Danielle McGurrin has been very busy. As a criminologist specializing in white collar crime, her expertise is in high demand. Social justice issues have always been a passion for McGurrin, leading to an interest in crimes committed by the powerful, often against society’s most disadvantaged.

McGurrin observed this in her early work focusing on industry-related corporate crimes that resulted in harm to health and the environment. Her research showed that companies were often deliberate in targeting poor, particularly minority, communities as the location for illegal practices.

These troubling findings provided the catalyst for her interest in the formation and enforcement of corporate and industry regulation. Most recently she’s looked at regulatory responses to violations of workplace safety and health laws in the U.S. apparel industry.

To limit corporate crime, McGurrin calls for tighter regulatory controls, increased resources for regulatory agencies, and consistent and significant punishments for corporate offenders. Also, cozy relationships between regulators and industry need to be severely curtailed. “To create lasting impacts,” McGurrin says, “we need many community partners engaged in public interest, labor, consumer, environmental, and media collaborating with government and business leaders to demand transparent, accountable, and ethical practices.”

To this end, McGurrin is offering a seminar on “Leadership in Corporate Crime Reform” as part of the Hatfield Summer Institute. Geared towards staff in government regulatory agencies, private industry, public interest groups, policy makers, and students alike, the August seminar focuses on the latest in corporate crime research and reforms necessary to reduce corporate crime. The seminar is an encore to a well-attended June presentation she delivered at the Hatfield Symposium on the corporate crime components of the ongoing BP oil spill. Commenting on the value of research in this context, McGurrin says, “It’s our best hope of identifying the kinds of policy solutions we need to help avert this sort of horrific disaster in the future.”

McGurrin’s seminar begins August 16. For information about registration for academic or continuing education credits, contact McGurrin at (503) 725-8356, or online at dmcgurri@pdx.edu.

Extreme Makeover: Web Edition

This summer the CJPRI website is being significantly remodeled in an effort to keep pace with continued growth in research staff and activity. Initially designed as a portal to direct visitors to sources of criminal justice-related information, the site is being overhauled in both content and layout. “We work on a variety of important crime and criminal justice issues at CJPRI and the goal of the redesign is to help make this research more accessible. We see this as part of our mission of public service,” says Emma Covelli, CJPRI Research Associate who is leading the redesign effort.

In addition to improved navigation, the new-and-improved site will provide information about ongoing and completed CJPRI research projects and will make the diverse expertise of the CCJ faculty more accessible to agencies and organizations. While the look and scope of the site is changing, it will still contain the popular features of the original site, including access to a host of publications and data sources relevant to crime prevention and criminal justice in Oregon and across the country.

Look for the launch of the updated site in Fall 2010, to replace the site at the current address: http://cjpri.ccj.pdx.edu