A Letter From Our Chair...

Criminal Justice and Social Work Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I would like to officially introduce you to our brand new UHD Department of Criminal Justice and Social Work Newsletter! First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Barbieri for creating this newsletter, Mrs. Gamino for helping us bring this effort to fruition, and our three student editors for helping conduct the interviews and gather the information. Second, I would like to thank you for being engaged in your Department by reading the newsletter. This inaugural issue is filled with descriptions of many of the great initiatives going on in the Department. There are so many examples of how our Department displays Gator Grit and specifically embodies our mission of service to our University and local communities. Each semester through this newsletter you will be introduced to faculty, staff, and students engaged in interesting and meaningful work both inside and outside of the classroom. Have you ever wondered what your professors do when they are not inside the classroom? Have you ever wondered how to get involved in a student organization as a Criminal Justice or Social Work major? This newsletter will provide you some insight on this. Have you ever thought about obtaining an internship or field placement? The newsletter is a great place to find out, not only about how to obtain internships, but also about the experiences our current interns are having in the field. I hope you enjoy this newsletter as much as we have enjoyed putting the pieces together. Of course, there is too much to cover in only one issue so we will be publishing issues each semester. If you have something special to share or input to provide, don’t hesitate to contact us. This newsletter belongs to and reflects all of us in the Department of Criminal Justice and Social Work; we would have no story to tell without you!

Dr. Ashley Blackburn
Chair, Department of Criminal Justice and Social Work
Current Undergraduate Research Projects

Social Work
There is currently a research collaboration between the UHD Department of Social Work and the UH Graduate College of Social Work. The two schools are conducting a Food Insecurity Survey targeting adolescents and young adults who are healthy or cancer survivors and enrolled in UH System schools. At UHD, Dr. Heather Goltz is working with the social work students in her research method courses to collect the data beginning in November and lasting until May. Once data have been collected, UHD and UH will work together to analyze the data and disseminate the results through the Association of Oncology Social Work and other professional societies.

Criminal Justice
Undergraduate Research Projects were conducted by the following students:

• Maria Lecona graduated in Spring 2018.
• Brandon Andrews will be graduating in Fall 2018.
• James Holt graduated in Spring 2018 and is currently enrolled in the MSCJ program.

The following lists the research projects and corresponding presentations they worked on while enrolled at UHD as undergraduate Criminal Justice majors.

Names A-L

Lee Smith
(713)221-5082
smithle@uhd.edu

Mercedes Gonzales
(713)221-8519
gonzalezmer@uhd.edu

Names M-Z

Mercedes Gonzales
(713)221-8519
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Current Undergraduate Research Projects

• Lecona, M. & Blackburn, A-G. (February 2018). “Don’t let me be Misunderstood” Awareness Gap of a Court Interpreter’s Role – A Contributing Factor to Vicarious Trauma.
  - Presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences New Orleans, LA.

  - Presented at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice, Fort Worth, TX.

  - Presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

  - Presented at annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

  - Presented at annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

  - Presented at annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.

Graduate Research Projects

2017

• Alberto Plata “The First Offender Education Program” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

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• Kimberly Newton “The Impact of Visitation on Female Inmates’ Mental Health” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

• Vanessa Kaban “Revocation Due to Probation Violation: An Examination of Issues with this Practice and Development of a Model Policy” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

• Ashleigh Howard “Domestic Violence Effects and Behaviors: Male and Female Adolescent Outcomes” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

• Dominique Bennett “Examining the implementation of Body Camera Programs and Policies with a Focus on School District Police Departments” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

2018

• Liselie Alcala “Phone Scams: An Exploratory Study of the Perception of Hispanics” Chair: Dr. Hsiao-Ming Wang

• Ashley Scroggins “Sexual Assault in the Armed Forces” Chair: Dr. Ashley Blackburn

• Michael Copley “Overcrowded Specialty Courts: Moving Forward” Chair: Dr. Michael Cavanaugh

• Kwanhatalai Tong “Aging Inmates and Health Care Costs” Chair: Dr. Michael Cavanaugh

• Hester Jones “Cordem Distribution Within State Prisons” Chair: Dr. Beth Pelz

School Violence, School Shootings, Bullying and Media Misrepresentation
Guest Speaker: Dr. Nadine Connell, Director, Center for Crime and Justice Studies, UT Dallas
5:30 - 7:00 pm, Room C-100

Time is Ticking...
Registration is just around the corner!
Schedule an appointment with your Criminal Justice advisor if you have any questions:

Names A-L

Lee Smith
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Names M-Z

Mercedes Gonzales
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Criminal Justice Internships & Jobs

Field training experience is a good resource to have on your resume as it shows practical job experience, leadership skills, and networking abilities. Additionally, it helps improve your knowledge and familiarization with different agencies you could work with upon graduation. Many undergraduate students take advantage of this great opportunity; the only requirements are to be a declared criminal justice major, completion of at least 60 semester hours, and have a good academic standing with a GPA of 2.5 or more. There are two options at the moment, either 120 on-site hours or 240 on-site hours. This translates to a 3-hour or 6-hour class credit, respectively. In order to obtain course credit, you must obtain approval. Currently, there are approximately 40 different agencies and divisions that students could pick from, including the Houston Police Department, Harris County Sheriff’s Department, Metro Police Department, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Crisis Investigation, Inc. Houston Crime Stoppers, Texas Attorney’s General Office, and the Missouri City Courts. For more information, contact Dr. Gilmore at gilmoree@uhd.edu

Social Work Person of the Year Presentation
5:30 - 7:00 pm, Room C-100

Student Highlights

31 JAN

Read More...
Ivica Marinovic is a student enrolled in the Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) program here at UHD. He is halfway through his studies and is currently enrolled in Advanced Criminology, Specialized Populations, and is taking part in an Independent Study class. He says, "By working closely with faculty members and classmates, my theoretical knowledge in the areas of criminological theory is growing deeper and, over time, has become more refined."

Ivica explains that he thoroughly enjoys his courses. He remarks that the program is developing his critical thinking and writing skills which will serve him as a "future leader, administrator, and research analyst of the criminal justice system." In addition, he discusses how the layout of the Master's program creates the perfect transition from an educational environment to the working environment. He says the theoretical and practical components of the criminal justice system that he learns from his professors extends beyond the classroom into his work in local criminal justice agencies.

Ivica is also involved in an externship with the Harris County Juvenile Probation research department. He says, "Currently, I am in the process of developing a project in program evaluation under the supervision of Matthew Shelton and Carla Glover. At this stage, I am reviewing previous work as well as coming up with the research question, hypothesis, and variables." He explains that there is a lack of program evaluation and that he enjoys the work he is doing. He adds the experience has helped him grow as a student, researcher, and professional.

MSCJ Student Highlight

My name is Ronald Restrepo and I am a senior undergraduate student here at the University of Houston-Downtown. I'm currently seeking a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with a Minor in Psychology. In the Fall of 2015, I decided to return to school to finish where I left off in 2008. I was excited, but at the same time scared because I didn't know what to expect. After completing two semesters, I met Dr. Gilmore, a Criminal Justice professor here at UHD. She became my mentor and inspired me to work hard on my education. Being able to meet people like her is one of the many unique characteristics of this department.

As a senior, I was able to participate in an internship program with the Houston Police Department in a program called Communicators on Patrol (COP). As a communicator, part of my job was able to assist HPD officers when responding to cases where language was a barrier for the officer to communicate with the citizen(s). This internship was an excellent opportunity for me and for other students who are also part of it to experience what it was actually like to respond to real police calls. One of the best features of participating in this program was that I was able to respond to all types of priority calls.

This semester I became the President of the Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students organization (PSCJS), a member of the criminal justice honor society, Alpha Phi Sigma, and a Student Ambassador representing the College of Public Service. I look forward to continuing my education here at UHD by seeking my Master's degree, also in Criminal Justice. My career goal is to become a police officer with the Houston Police Department and be able to keep broadening my knowledge about investigating cases of child neglect and abuse. I'm thrilled about graduating this fall.

Student Organizations

Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students
is a professional student organization with a focus on Criminal Justice careers. The organization networks with a diverse array of criminal justice agencies and individuals to help students learn about the field of criminal justice and better prepare for their future careers. PSCJS is open to both undergraduate and graduate students who are pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice or interested in the Criminal Justice field. Must be in good academic standing with a 2.0 GPA or higher. For more information, contact Dr. Gilmore at gilmoree@uhd.edu.

Alpha Phi Sigma
is the national criminal justice honor’s society and recognizes academic excellence, community service, and leadership. Students must have a 3.2 GPA (3.4 Graduate) and have completed 12 hours of CJ classes for eligibility. Each semester, we also participate in many hours of community service with our community Questions? Email faculty advisor Dr. Barbieri BarbieriN@uhd.edu or APS President Tris Scheer scheertr4@gator.uhd.edu.

Phi Alpha
The national honor society for students of social work and was established at UHD in 2015. Phi Alpha is well-respected by employers, social workers, and graduate schools. The organization's humanitarian goals and ideas encourage members to participate in the community, promote a sense of fellowship among students, and provide leadership opportunities within the chapter and initiate change where needed. Currently, Phi Alpha is planning volunteer opportunities that will increase member engagement within the community. A benefit of joining Phi Alpha is the lifetime membership, with inductions held twice a year. If you are a current social work student, then you may apply to join at the beginning of the upcoming Spring semester. Please contact phialphauhd@gmail.com if you would like more information.

SWSCAN
The Social Work Student Community Advocacy Network was founded in 2012; one of the original founding members is our very own Professor Damaris Cortez. SWSCAN is an organization founded on the principles of service to the community and abides by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. The organization aims to build camaraderie between social work students and encourages freshmen and sophomores to become more involved with the UHD campus. In the last year, the organization has participated in creating the Rainbow Room in the Social Work Suite, which is a designated space where students in need of food, clothes, and hygiene products are able to get what they need. Recently, SWSCAN participated in the annual Aga Kahn Walk. SWSCAN is a great way to become more involved in the community and is an organization that is open to all UHD students regardless of major. Please contact uhdsWSCan@gmail.com if you would like more information.