

THE WESTERN CRIMINOLOGIST

Spring 2007

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY

Editor: Dr. Yvette Farmer, Criminal Justice Division, CSU-Sacramento, 6000 J St. Sacramento, CA 95819-6085

From the President

John Vivian

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

The Western Society of Criminology (WSC) provides an intimate, multidisciplinary forum for scholars, practitioners and other interested individuals to promote the systematic study of our criminal and juvenile justice systems. Regional in emphasis, the WSC also engages national and international experts in criminology and criminal justice. The WSC is rich in tradition. It was founded by Tom Gitchoff and June Morrison in the 1970s, and many WSC prior award recipients participated in our 2007 conference including C. Ronald Huff, Finn-Aage Esbensen, Barbara Bloom, Barbara Owen, Paul Brantingham, Gisela Bichler, Marjorie Zatz and Julius Debro.

President Sue Cote welcomed 129 colleagues to our 2007 conference in Arizona. Almost one-third of the 2007 conference attendees were students. Thanks to the hard work of Christine Famega and Adrienne Freng, the WSC presented 23 panels over two days. Colleagues from three countries (Canada, United Kingdom and the United States) and 23 states and provinces presented their research findings. Clear, warm Arizona days and cool nights were enjoyed by all. Finn Aage-Esbensen reviewed his latest work at a wine and cheese reception. Brenda Vogel ensured that conference meals were excellent, while also reasonably priced and well planned. Generous donations were made by the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at Arizona State University – West and Lexis Nexis. More than eight publishers donated popular and recently published books for display. At conference end, the books were sold for a nominal fee, and the proceeds deposited into the June Morrison fund to support future student travel to WSC conferences. The Radisson Fort McDowell Resort and Casino hosted the 2007 conference, and they did an outstanding job. Mike Day kept a sharp eye on conference costs to ensure that conference income exceeded costs.

The WSC Board has wasted no time in getting down to business for the new year. Sharon Chamard and Andre Rosay are continuing their hard work as Co-Editors of the *Western Criminology Review*, while Yvette Farmer will continue as Editor of the *Western Criminologist*. Adrienne Freng is our new Vice President, and she is working with Christine Famega on our February 2008 conference in Sacramento, California. Sue Cote is working with Pat Jackson to

update the WSC website (www.sonoma.edu.cja.wsc.wscmain.html). Former WSC President Chris Curtis will once again work on nominations, while Connie Ireland will focus her talents on membership and publicity. Stacy Mallicoat will Chair the WSC Awards committee. Aili Malm and Bryan Kinney will oversee the WSC student paper competition. Brenda Vogel and Laurie Kubicek are engaged in coordinating local arrangements and facilities in Sacramento, while Finn Aage-Esbensen will be a valued WSC Executive Counselor. Michelle Anderson will help the Board operate in compliance with our constitution and by-laws, and Mary Maguire will organize our book exhibit. Andrew Yetter from Sacramento State is the WSC Student Representative for 2007-2008.

The Board is excited about planning a 2009 conference in Hawaii, and a 2010 conference in San Diego. Both locations have been popular WSC conference sites in the past.

Please consider becoming more involved with the Western Society of Criminology. Mike Day our Secretary-Treasurer will be stepping down at the end of this year, and we are welcoming nominations from our membership to assume responsibility for this important position. While we have an excellent team in place to perform the necessary work in 2007-2008, it's always a good idea to recruit fresh talent. Please contact me at jvivan@azdjc.gov or 602-542-2274 if you would like to become more active in the WSC, and we will find a spot for you to make a meaningful contribution.

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From the Editor

Yvette Farmer

At the recent WSC meeting in Arizona, the Executive Board discussed and later decided to publish two issues of the newsletter each year – Spring and Fall. Conference-related information from the February meeting will now appear in the Spring issue.

In an effort to see that the newsletter remains informative and continues to challenge its readers to critically evaluate important issues in criminology and criminal justice, you will see an article on California's new sex offender law and another about teaching critical thinking to criminal justice majors. In *Miki's Reflections*, you will see her thoughts about the need for students to conduct research. If these pieces inspire you to share your thoughts in an upcoming issue of the newsletter, please let me know.

This is *our* newsletter and I would like to encourage all of the readers to take an active role in sharing important ideas and information with our membership. The deadline for receipt of materials will be March 1st for the Spring issue and August 1st for the Fall issue. Ideas should be sent to Dr. Yvette Farmer, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95815-6015. The telephone number is (916) 278-5062 or 278-6487 (message).

I look forward to hearing your ideas, answering your questions, or addressing your concerns about the newsletter.



Thoughts from the Plenary Speaker: Marianne Neilson

Our plenary speaker, Professor Marianne Neilson from Northern Arizona University, discussed Native American criminal justice. She learned the importance of this issue in graduate school by obtaining practical experience working on Native issues in Canada. Her primary area of interest is indigenous criminal justice issues.

Dr. Neilson informed the audience that the roots of Native American issues are deep in colonialism. Native Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, which is not unusual in lands that have been colonized around the world. Professor Neilson shared her theory about the relationship between colonization and justice as follows:

Colonization → Marginalization → Criminal Justice Involvement

The plenary discussion included information about major change agents in colonization such as depopulation, economic dependency, colonial ideology, and laws. Several examples of marginalization included the relatively large proportion of Native American people that: do not finish high school (24%); live below

the poverty line (20%); and are unemployed (14%). The involvement of Native Americans in the criminal justice system occurs in numerous ways: 1) they are overrepresented in the criminal justice system—both as offenders and victims; and 2) they are underrepresented as service providers in the criminal justice system.

According to Dr. Neilson, the justice responses to colonialization and marginalization are two-fold: 1) cultural revitalization; and 2) sovereignty initiatives. One effect of the sovereignty response has been indigenization resulting in increase perceived legitimacy (short-term) and further assimilation (long-term). Far more resources are needed including realistic funding and control over the funds, increased sovereignty, and academic contributions.

Professor Neilson concluded the plenary session by describing the type of academic contributions that can be made as follows: 1) design research that is useful to Native American communities and organizations; 2) use culturally appropriate protocols and methodologies; 3) respect Native American culture, history, traditions, differences, and similarities; and 4) make a commitment to Native Americans by practicing reciprocity—e.g., if Native Americans provide researchers with access and information, provide them with a report.



Thoughts from our Keynote Speaker: Marjorie Zatz

Marjorie Zatz presented information about the relationship between immigration, crime, and justice focusing on the social and political implications of recent U.S. immigration policies. Her central argument is that race, ethnicity, gender, and crime must be contextualized in studying justice. In other words, at a minimum we must consider: language, culture, structural factors, and racialized and gendered constructions of crime problems. If we are studying immigrants, we must also consider: national origin, immigration status, and immigration politics. According to Dr. Zatz, immigration is the most crucial factor in understanding crime and justice in the Southwestern United States.

The number of immigrants in the United States is estimated in the millions. Immigrants often come from Mexico and now cross the border in more dangerous places resulting in more deaths. Over 40% of the immigrants in the United States live in California, Texas, or Arizona. A notable percentage of immigrants also live in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and North Carolina. One-sixth of the undocumented immigrants are under age 18 and the legal statuses of family members are often mixed.

Although there is an assumption that immigration is tied to crime, recent research indicates that immigrants are less prone to criminal activity. According to Professor Zatz, this misconception has been

shaped by the media, judicial bias, and law enforcement. She also contends that the assumption that all Latinos are immigrants has fueled efforts toward deportation. She claims that people have been targeted by skin color and language. Dr. Zatz also claims that there is a relationship between immigration and victimization. Immigrants are vulnerable to crime because they are a 'shadow population' and underreport victimizations because of language, cultural barriers, and fear of the criminal justice system and deportation. Efforts to reduce underreporting include sanctuary policies and establishing special Visa categories (although the number is inadequate compared to the need).

Official and vigilante border patrols have increased and human trafficking is a disturbing reality. In Arizona, both immigrants and traffickers are charged in these cases. Immigration stories appear daily in print, television, and radio news reports. The public ranks illegal immigration as an important problem and all Arizona 2006 ballot measures that disadvantage immigrants passed. These measures mean increased social costs by way of limited access to higher education and higher criminal justice system costs by increased detention and incarceration.



COME JOIN US!

WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
35TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HOLIDAY INN
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
FEBRUARY 14 - 16, 2008

We encourage you to mark your calendar for the 35th Annual Conference of the WSC. The theme of the conference is *Social Justice: Informing Evidence-based Policy and Planning*. The Program Chairs are: Dr. Christine Famega, Department of Criminal Justice, CSU San Bernardino, 5500 University Parkway, San Bernardino, CA 92407 and Dr. Adrienne Freng, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Wyoming, 1000 E. University, Dept. 3197, Laramie, WY 82071. The Call for Papers appears in this issue, but you may also want to contact Dr. Famega, Dr. Freng, or check out our website - www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/main/html for additional information about the conference. We look forward to seeing you in California's Capital City!



WSC Awards 2007

Recipient of the Western Society of Criminology Fellows Award 2006-2007:

- *Elizabeth (Libby) Deschenes*

Recipients of the Western Society of Criminology Awards 2006-2007:

The Paul Tappan Award-

For Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Criminology

- *Marjorie Zatz*

The Joseph D. Lohman Award-

For Outstanding Service to the Western Society of Criminology

- *Brenda Vogel and Mike Day*

The June Morrison-Tom Gitchoff Founders Award-

For Significant Improvement in the Quality of Justice

- *Nancy Wonders*

President's Award-

For Contributions to the Field of Criminology and Positive Influence on the Current President's Career

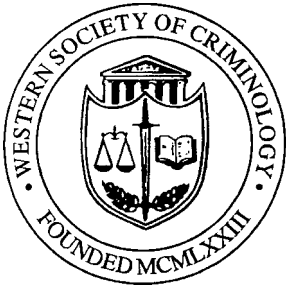
- *Miki Vohryzek-Bolden*

W.E.B. DuBois Award-

For Significant Contributions to the Field of Racial and Ethnic Issues in Criminology

- *Raymond Michalowski*





CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Western Society of Criminology

35th Annual Conference

Theme – Social Justice: Informing Evidence-Based
Policy and Planning

February 14-16, 2008 • Sacramento, CA

➤ Please note that the deadline to send abstracts topic chairs is October 5, 2007 ◀

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* Continued *

In deciding the most appropriate place to send your abstract, think about the main focus of your paper and how it might fit with the topic of the panel. For example, if your paper examines both race and juvenile issues, think about whether you would like to be placed on a panel with other papers discussing race issues or other papers dealing with juvenile issues and then send to the most appropriate topic chair. Electronic submissions are preferred to hard copies being mailed or faxed. All presenters are asked to submit an abstract to only one of the panel topics listed above. **ALSO, PLEASE KEEP YOUR ABSTRACT TO 150 WORDS OR LESS.**

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION!

All conference participants need to make reservations by January 15, 2008. Information about the Holiday Inn Capital Plaza can be found on the hotel website (www.holidayinnsacramento.com) or by calling 1-800-HOLIDAY or directly at 916-446-0100. To receive the conference rate of \$124+tax (single) or \$134+tax (double), you need to indicate that you are with the Western Society of Criminology Annual Conference.

STUDENTS

The Western Society of Criminology provides several opportunities for students in conjunction with the annual conference, including travel money and a paper competition. Please see the following for requirements and application information.

June Morrison Scholarship Fund: The WSC offers five (\$100) student scholarships for participation in our annual conference. WSC student members who have had their papers selected for presentation are eligible to apply, and the funds are awarded on a first-come, first served basis. Applications must be received by January 1, 2008, and information can be obtained by consulting *Student Information*, which is in the *Conference* section of the WSC website (<http://www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/wscpages/conference.htm>)

Miki Vohryzek-Bolden (MVB) Student Paper Competition : Students are eligible to complete in a Student Paper Competition sponsored by WSC. One undergraduate and one graduate student paper (either sole authored or co-authored) will be selected. Papers co-authored by faculty will not be considered. Appropriate types of papers include but are not limited to policy analyses, original research, literature reviews, position papers, theoretical papers, and commentaries. Students selected for this award will be recognized at the conference and will receive a cash award and registration reimbursement. Information can be obtained by consulting *Student Information*, which is in the *Conference* section of the WSC website (<http://www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/wscpages/conference.htm>).

MIKI'S REFLECTIONS

One would think that it would be easy to recruit and train students to work with faculty on their research contracts. One would also think that with proper training, these student employees would achieve the same level of accuracy that one might expect from full-time staff. Well, reality has set in for me and it is very disconcerting.

My colleagues and I at California State University, Sacramento have several research contracts with state agencies. One of the biggest challenges we have involves finding and hiring quality students to assist us with some of the less desirable aspects of research – data entry. When we ask our colleagues if they can recommend students who are detail oriented and hard workers, they are hard pressed to recommend any particular student. One recent experience with hiring students for a short turnaround for entry of a very large amount of data taught us that finding quality workers is difficult. We now have to deal with a dataset that has well-over the 2 percent of acceptable data entry errors.

My question: Why is finding students such a challenge? Perhaps the problems are due to the fact that Sacramento State University is a commuter campus and most of our students have to work, many full-time. Perhaps our students' have a different mindset about work and do not understand that often one must start at the bottom and move up as one's knowledge, skills, and abilities develop. Do I sound old and from another generation?

As many of you know, I am a strong advocate of students and also believe that providing them with the opportunity to have professional experiences that apply some of what they learn in the classroom is critical. Data entry is not glamorous but in research, you have to start somewhere. Once a student gains more understanding about data, perhaps s/he will be ready to do participate in higher-level research activities, such as conducting interviews.

I have a serious concern that as we obtain more research contracts, we may not be able to find the student work force to support the tasks and deliverables. What a lost opportunity, for the faculty and the students. And where does that leave us in terms of fulfilling our professorial responsibilities? In 1994, I wrote that "No discussion of our responsibilities as professors can be separated from a discussion of our obligations to explore and investigate issues we consider important intellectually and practically." Faculty members need their students as they pursue these scholarly and research opportunities. What if they are not there? Then what do we do?



TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE MAJORS

Yvette Farmer, Ph.D.
California State University, Sacramento

Critical thinking has been defined in numerous ways. Some of the common ideas associated with these definitions include the ability to: evaluate statements to distinguish between facts and opinions; use logic and reasoning; generate pertinent questions; interpret data; and resolve problems. Students that come into a course with these skills can elevate the classroom experience by raising important questions and enhancing communication among participants.

Critical thinking skills are important for a variety of areas studied within criminal justice. For example, criminal law requires that students engage in analytical reasoning before drawing any conclusions. Law enforcement students would also benefit from critical thinking skills, especially in the area of community policing where police officers and other criminal justice professionals work with members of the community to reduce crime. These professionals evaluate reasoning used by community members attempting to identify crime problems and then help those members make responsible decisions regarding the use of their time and efforts. Students interested in corrections would also benefit from critical thinking skills because critical thinkers develop and exhibit personal traits such as fair-mindedness and empathy. An introductory criminal justice course exposes students to all of these topics: criminal law, law enforcement, and corrections.

The right time to teach critical thinking skills to criminal justice majors is at the beginning of (and throughout) their criminal justice education. Students need opportunities to engage in critical thinking during their very first criminal justice course and in the subsequent courses taken within the major. It is my contention that students should be exposed early and often to activities that develop critical thinking skills (within and beyond the major). If this is done, then students may be more receptive to advanced courses that include abstract ideas such as research methods and criminological theory.

Developing critical thinking skills within students requires pedagogical approaches that differ from the traditional lecture class format. Two such approaches include: 1) assigning tasks that require students to use empirical evidence to make sense of criminal justice phenomena; and 2) using class time to discuss alternative explanations for criminal justice-related behaviors. When students engage in class discussions where critical thinking is emphasized, they have opportunities to be active in their learning processes *and* they can learn from each other.

Criminal justice offers a curriculum that serves students with a variety of interests. Some students may venture toward the pre-law path where analytical reasoning and other critical thinking skills are required for success. Other students may be interested in

pursuing careers in law enforcement and corrections where the possession of critical thinking skills, such as effective problem solving, can literally influence their survival. An important part of the educational process should be the development of critical thinking skills—such an endeavor would benefit all criminal justice students and the agencies or organizations that will eventually employ them.



CALIFORNIA'S NEW SEX OFFENDER LAW

**Andrew Yetter, Graduate Student
California State University, Sacramento**

In California's November 2006 General Election, over 70% of voters said yes to enactment of Proposition 83, the Sexual Predator Punishment and Control Act, otherwise known as Jessica's Law. Proposition 83, authored by married California State Legislature members George and Sharon Runner, seeks to make communities safer from sexual predators. In reality it is another example of legislation fueled by fear and anger, with little or no thought placed on the rights of those it affects and practicalities of its requirements.

Among the many stipulations of the legislation are a 2000 foot residency restriction and lifetime GPS monitoring of convicted sex offenders within the state. In addition to these regulations, Prop. 83 contains stricter sentencing guidelines for those convicted of violent sex offenses as well as new rules for the classification and parole of sentenced offenders. Without a doubt, the most controversial aspects of the legislation are the residency restriction and GPS monitoring rules. Immediately following passage of this legislation, challenges were filed against these stipulations in the San Francisco and Sacramento Superior Courts.

Residency restrictions, lifetime GPS monitoring and increased incarceration would appear to be expensive stipulations, but nowhere within the proposition is an estimated cost to the State of California mentioned. Without providing any hard numbers, in its summary, the state Attorney General's (AG) office concluded that the implementation and operating costs of Prop. 83 would be "astounding." According to the AG's summary of fiscal impact, Prop. 83 will result in "Net state prison, parole, and health costs of several tens of millions of dollars initially, growing to a couple hundred million dollars annually within ten years. Net state and local costs for court and jail operations are unknown."

Only one other state, Iowa, has previously enacted legislation similar to Prop. 83. The Iowa sex offender residency law was enacted in 2005. It forbids all convicted sex offenders from living within 2,000 feet of any school, park or place where children are known to congregate. An independent study conducted by the Iowa County Attorney's Association's in December 2006 reports, "The geographic areas included in the prohibited 2,000 foot zones

are so extensive that realistic opportunities to find affordable housing are virtually eliminated in most communities". This presents a very interesting challenge to California's residency restriction, especially in urban areas where space is limited such as San Francisco and Los Angeles. Iowa has also had trouble enforcing their restrictions, as officers have had difficulty finding individuals that must move. As of 2007, Iowa officials were unable to locate 140 offenders out of a total population of 6,000. Using this ratio and applying it to California would result in more than 4,000 missing offenders as our current total is 63,000 convicted sex offenders.

Currently, Prop. 83 is awaiting implementation. In February, the Superior Court threw out the San Francisco case and ruled that residency restrictions would not be enforced retroactively. The Sacramento case, which also deals with the residency restriction as well as the GPS monitoring stipulation, has yet to be heard in court.



An invitation to share your thoughts...

As a community of scholars in academia and various professional agencies, we have many thoughts and experiences that we could share with each other. Do you feel strongly about a certain topic? Would you be willing to write about it? Do you believe that others would enjoy reading it? If you answered 'yes' to these questions, please consider sending me an article that I can publish in the newsletter. Your thoughts may benefit all of us and should be sent to Yvette Farmer at drfarmer@csus.edu.



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