Disproportionate Experiences in Custody? An Examination of Minority Youths’ Outcomes in Secure Facilities

Friday, September 28th
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
SSB Building, Room 132

While a significant amount of literature has emphasized the identification and explanation of disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in the juvenile justice system, less research has examined racial disparities in post-disposition outcomes. This study seeks to address this gap through its examination of the experiences of youths in custody. Specifically, using a stratified, random subsample of 1,514 youths confined in secure confinement facilities between 2010 and 2014 in one Midwestern state, this paper explores whether youths’ race impacts in-facility outcomes, such as number of disciplinary infractions, time spent in seclusion, length of stay, and access to educational services, when case-level predictors are accounted for. Findings suggest that race has an inconsistent relationship with the outcomes experienced by youths in custody. However, significant mediating effects of disciplinary infractions on relationships between race and other outcomes appear to have implications for youths in custody. Considering these findings, policy recommendations are discussed.

Dr. Chris Sullivan
Christopher J. Sullivan is Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Criminal Justice at the University of Cincinnati. He received his doctoral degree from Rutgers University in 2005. His main research interests include developmental and life-course criminology; juvenile delinquency and prevention policy; and research methodology and analytic methods. He has published roughly 80 academic articles and book chapters on various justice and criminology-related topics. Since 2000, he has worked as a Data Analyst or Principal Investigator on several federally or state-funded studies of juvenile justice and delinquency issues. His recent research has been funded by the State of Ohio, National Institute of Justice, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.