



Hello to all UMSL CCJ faculty, students, and friends –

Please find the latest UMSL CCJ newsletter below. We realize that this email comes at an important time in our society, where issues of anti-Black racism are at the center of national conversations about criminal justice. Thus, we want to take this opportunity to not only share our newsletter that highlights many of the accomplishments of our students and faculty since our last newsletter, and to let you know that we will strive to be at the center of these conversations. We also echo the recent statements made by University of Missouri System President Mun Choi and UMSL Chancellor Sobolik that “we have no tolerance for discrimination or acts of hate in our community and encourage robust, respectful dialogue. No matter where you come from, no matter your race, gender, identity, preference or perspective, we all come together to learn, and everyone deserves to be treated with respect and to thrive.”

We hope you are all staying safe and healthy.

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## COVID-19 shapes our lives and research

COVID-19 represents a major turning point in our lives: many of us are dealing with loss, uncertainty, and other types of hardships. Like many places, UMSL closed on-campus instruction and activities in the middle of March. As we wrap up the end of the semester with social distancing and working from home, COVID-19 is also shaping our own scholarship.



### Health in an era of decarceration

Because prisons and jails remain vulnerable spaces for COVID, faculty are working on decarceration to lower population density. Beth Huebner is working to reduce the jail population in St. Louis County and address racial and ethnic disparities in incarceration. She serves on the population review team to identify individuals who can be released safely and to ensure that community supports are in place. Along with Lee Slocum, Huebner is also developing data capacity in St. Louis County to understand how early release policies as a response to COVID-19 influence public safety. Marisa Omori co-authored an op-ed highlighting the need to release people from jails and prisons as a public health measure, and that

policy makers should create decarceration policies to ameliorate broader health harms caused by mass incarceration. She is an investigator on the [COVID Prison Project](#) tracking cases in prisons. Graduate student Luis Torres is studying how COVID impacts the judicial process and outcomes of detention cases in a criminal court, especially as jail populations become places for large-scale infections. [Rachel Ellis](#) also wrote an op-ed discussing the [additional challenges faced by women](#) in jail and prison during this time.

## Highlighting prison labor

Faculty are also shedding light on prison labor, illustrated most recently by Governor Cuomo's quick move to manufacture hand sanitizer by incarcerated people in New York State. Rachel Ellis' article in Contexts magazine, titled "[Underpaid and unprotected: Prison labor in the age of coronavirus](#)," examines how the production of hand sanitizer in prison factories brings to light the tensions around prison punishment and labor that have haunted the U.S. correctional system for centuries. As Ellis points out in her article, "The production of hand sanitizer by incarcerated workers is especially cruel because the product itself is treated as contraband in prison."

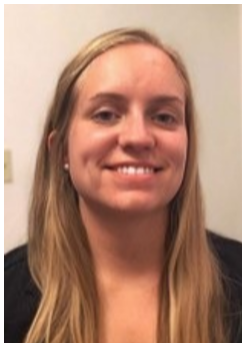
## Policing and public safety

Other faculty and students are commenting on how social isolation impacts crime and the police's response to it. Lee Slocum and Beth Huebner are developing a partnership with the Normandy Police Department and Beyond Housing to document how fragmentation affects the ability of law enforcement to respond effectively and efficiently to emerging public safety threats, such as COVID-19. [Richard Rosenfeld](#) is [featured in several media outlets](#) discussing the decrease in crime rates since the increase of quarantines. However, there are concerns over [increased domestic violence](#) cases as people remain in their houses during social isolation.

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## Kelsey Cundiff and Samantha Simon join CCJ faculty

While we are sad to say goodbye to our colleagues, Stephanie DiPietro and Rachel Ellis, we are excited to announce that Kelsey Cundiff and Samantha Simon will be joining the UMSL CCJ faculty this fall as Assistant Professors.



Kelsey Cundiff is receiving her Ph.D. in the Department of Sociology and Criminology from Pennsylvania State University. Her primary research interests include communities and crime, adolescent delinquency, and crime trends. Her dissertation, for which she was awarded a fellowship from the Harry F. Guggenheim Foundation, draws on life-course and developmental criminological theories to illuminate several individual-level attitudes and behaviors that may have been instrumental in explaining the crime decline during the 1990s.



Samantha Simon is receiving her Ph.D. in the Department of Sociology from The University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include gender, race, the criminal justice system, workplace inequality, and violence. In her dissertation she uses ethnographic methods to study how police officers learn to use violence. Drawing on one year of field work at police departments, she turns the attention away from explanations of police violence that point to officers' individual racial biases, the purported necessity of using force in high-crime areas, or inadequate de-escalation training, to instead examine how police hiring and training result in racist violence.



# UMSL ranked among top 5 criminology and criminal justice master's programs

The University of Missouri–St. Louis has long been considered among the leading graduate programs in criminology and criminal justice in the country.



It's no surprise then when others recognize the program's excellence. Recently, CriminalJusticeDegreeHub.com ranked the UMSL master's program fifth on its list of "Top 10 Campus Master's in Criminal Justice Programs for 2019." [READ MORE.](#)

If you are interested in finding more information about our MA program and/or applying, please find more information [here.](#)

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## Announcing our new BS/MA joint program

The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is offering a NEW joint degree program that allows UMSL undergraduate students to simultaneously earn their BS and their MA in Criminology and Criminal Justice in as few as 10 semesters! If interested in learning more about this new program, please contact [Tim Maher](#) (CCJ's Undergraduate Program Director) or [Elaine Doherty](#) (CCJ's Graduate Program Director).



# Criminology PhD students win national recognition for scholarly work over the past year

The University of Missouri–St. Louis has long been recognized as one of the nation’s premier training grounds for future criminologists, and that reputation isn’t changing.

This last academic year, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice PhD students Claire Greene, Kristina Thompson Garrity, Cherrell Green, Jennifer Gerlomes Medel, Jennifer O’Neill, and Paige Vaughn each received national awards or other honors for their scholarly papers. Claire Greene and Kristina Thompson Garrity both won Gene Carte Student Paper Competition Awards from the American Society of Criminology. Cherrell Green won paper awards from the Western Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Jennifer Medel was one of two winners of the Graduate Student Paper award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division of Victimology for a paper examining instances of court-reported civil protection order violations. Jennifer O’Neill and Paige Vaughn were each accepted into competitive junior scholars workshops. [READ MORE](#)

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## Congrats to our recent PhD graduates!



Sandra Trujillo successfully defended her dissertation titled “A Dynamic Approach to Understanding Ethnicity, Immigration and Violent Crime in Chicago Neighborhoods” in Spring 2019. This Fall 2020, she will be joining the tenure-track faculty as an Assistant Professor at New Mexico State’s Department of Criminal Justice.



Kristina Thompson Garrity successfully defended her dissertation titled "Rural Crime and the City: Exploring the Criminological Consequences of Rural-Urban Interdependency" in spring 2020. She will be joining the tenure-track faculty as an Assistant Professor at Georgia Southern University’s Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology in Fall 2020.



Theodore Lentz will be defending his dissertation titled “Path Dependence in Crime: Chance, History, and Emergence of Geographic Crime Patterns” in summer 2020. In Fall 2020 he will be joining the tenure-track faculty as an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology.

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## Faculty Spotlight

Beth Huebner, a professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, is teaming with other researchers in the University of Missouri System to try to improve the prison environment in the state.



Earlier this week, the Urban Institute announced that Missouri was among five states chosen to be part of phase 1 of the Prison Research and Innovation Network.

The institute, with support from Arnold Ventures, awarded a \$200,000 grant to support a collaborative effort between the UM System researchers and the Missouri Department of Corrections. [READ MORE](#)

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## Student Spotlight

[Paige Vaughn](#), who is a PhD candidate, is currently serving as a Research Scholar at [Yale Law School's Justice Collaboratory](#). Vaughn is developing engagement and dissemination strategies, working with Tom Tyler to outline a review of international procedural justice research, and working with Emily LaGratta and the Connecticut Department of Corrections to develop and evaluate a corrections-based procedural justice training. Their goal for the procedural justice project is to improve communications and trust-building interactions between corrections staff and incarcerated persons, increase incarcerated persons' perceptions of fairness, and improve correction officers' job satisfaction.



In her position, Vaughn also [interviewed Yale Law students about a lawsuit](#) that the ACLU-Connecticut, Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, incarcerated people, and lawyers from Yale Law School's Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic and Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization brought against CT Governor Ned Lamont and Department of Corrections Commissioner Rollin Cook to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the number of people who are incarcerated in Connecticut's jails and prisons.

Vaughn's research interests include crime control policy, law and society, and race and inequality, and her dissertation examines processes affecting racial disparities in victim and defendant treatment across police and court case processing stages.

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## Doctoral student Tony Michalka studying changes in policing in the aftermath of Ferguson



## Outstanding undergraduate students awarded scholarships and named to Chair's List

Undergraduate students Anida Junuzovic and Alexandra Nagy were recently awarded the Doris Fishman Administration of Justice Scholarship, which recognizes outstanding students who are pursuing a Criminology and Criminal Justice major. Tiffanie Schultz and Arina Chsherbina were awarded the Jennings Do-Dads Juvenile Justice Scholarship, which recognizes outstanding students who have an interest and commitment to work in juvenile justice.

Additionally, fourteen undergraduate students were named to the Chair's List. Each year, Criminology and Criminal Justice faculty members nominate undergraduate students who have done outstanding work in one or more of their courses to the department's Chair's List. Students must also meet a cumulative grade-point average threshold. Each student receives a letter of recognition from the Chair and the Dean of Arts and Sciences is notified of their accomplishment. Congratulations to the following students:

Tess Abilock  
Majd Awanda  
Jacob Beer  
Haley Buchana  
Alyssa Carpenter  
Traci Hallquist  
Sarah Larash  
Melissa Maune  
Madison (Maddie) Moore  
Alex Sitar  
Enedin Subasic  
Dustin Taber  
Tao Tran  
Merel Visser



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In our most recent newsletter, we neglected to include ALL of our PhD students who have graduated since our last newsletter. We are so sorry - Congratulations to all of you!!



Amanda Bolton successfully defended her dissertation titled ““I Am Whatever You Say I Am”: The Social Construction of Identity in Rural Drug-Using Women’s Narratives” in Spring 2019. Dr. Bolton is a Senior Research, Strategy & Management Consultant in Los Angeles. Her most recent work focuses on results-based educational innovation across 19 community colleges in the Los Angeles region.



Joshua Williams defended his dissertation titled “Assessing the Impact of County-Level Factors on Pretrial Detention Decisions” in December 2018 after starting as an Assistant Professor at Arkansas State University in Fall 2018.



Aaron Levin defended his dissertation titled “Understanding Micro-Spatial Crime Patterns: A Comprehensive Trajectory Analysis of Violent Crime at Street Segments in St. Louis, MO” in December 2018. Dr. Levin is a Geospatial Analyst at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in St. Louis.

Allen Shamow successfully defended his dissertation titled “An Unholy Union? The Relationship between Protestantism and Homicide” in Spring 2018. Dr. Shamow is a counselor at Lake Orion Counseling Center in Michigan.





CheyOnna Sewell successfully defended her dissertation titled “Gender Inequality, Intersectionality, and Violence Against Women: A National- and State-level Analysis of Violence Against Women Trends” in Spring 2018. Dr. Sewell is a Lecturer at the University of Colorado-Boulder’s Department of Ethnic Studies.



Timothy McCuddy successfully defended his dissertation titled “Online Socialization and Delinquency: Expanding the Study of Peer Influence in Criminology” in Spring 2018. Dr. McCuddy is an Assistant Professor in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Memphis.



Michael Deckard successfully defended his dissertation titled "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: The Temporal Stability of Crime Hot Spots and the Criminology of Place" in Spring 2018. Dr. Deckard is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University.



Brooke Mayfield successfully defended her dissertation titled “The Effectiveness of Treatment as Policy for Sex Offenders” in December 2017. Dr. Mayfield is the Assistant Director of Investigations at the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

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