



THE WESTERN CRIMINOLOGIST

Fall 2008

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

Adrienne Freng
University of Wyoming

Well it's that time of year again – time to start thinking about submitting your research to the annual WSC conference! The Western's Board is in full swing planning an exciting conference in San Diego. The conference will be held February 5-7 at the Island Palms Hotel and Marina. The theme this year is "Crime and Criminal Justice on the Border." The Board is working hard to solicit and invite several speakers to discuss this timely and relevant issue. As in years past, we will begin the conference with a President's reception on Thursday night, with breakout sessions occurring throughout the day on both Friday and Saturday. So now it's up to you – the membership – to send us your exciting and groundbreaking new research for the breakout sessions. The Call for Papers is included with this newsletter and posted on our website. The deadline for submission is October 6th.

As in the past, we are strongly encouraging students to participate in this year's conference and as a result, WSC provides several opportunities that assist with travel expenses. Please promote or apply for the June Morrison Scholarship, which awards funds on a first come/first serve basis to students who participate in the Conference. This year the deadline for this award is October 6th, so please get your applications in quickly. WSC also recognizes excellence among students by awarding the Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition Award. To be considered for this award, students need to submit their abstract for the Conference by October 6th to the appropriate section and then submit the finalized paper by January 5, 2009. This year the board has added something new to the paper competition in hopes of encouraging more submissions. In addition to winning a monetary award, the best paper will be submitted to WCR for consideration for publication. What a wonderful opportunity for a student who is looking for a venue for their work! Information on both of these awards can be found on the Western's website at: <http://www.sonoma.edu/ccjs/wsc/>.

In addition to preparing for the upcoming conference, the Board is busy with various other activities. We will be meeting in September to discuss a variety of topics including future meeting sites,

updating the constitution, nominations for 2009-2010 Board, increasing the visibility of the journal, and increasing membership in the organization. We will be asking for votes on some of these issues from the membership and as always we are interested in any questions, comments and/or suggestions that you might have to improve the organization as a whole, so please share these with us. Additionally, as I stated in my last column, as the next conference looms closer, please encourage your colleagues, students, research associates, practitioners, government officials, and anyone that would benefit from what you already know is a fantastic organization to join us at the conference in San Diego. We hope to see you there!



From the Editor Yvette Farmer

You may notice that this issue of the newsletter contains a variety of encouraging information related to future WSC conferences. The success of our conferences depends on your participation in them. We enjoy providing participants with an opportunity to present their work and hope that you will share your ideas by submitting an abstract very soon.

In an effort to see that the newsletter remains informative and continues to challenge its readers to critically evaluate important issues

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in criminology and criminal justice, you will see an article on the benefits of good writing and another article on the 'double-shift' experience for graduate students. In Miki's Reflections, you will see her thoughts about conducting policy relevant research. If these pieces motivate 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 95819-6085. 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.



COME JOIN US!

**WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
36TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ISLAND PALMS HOTEL & MARINA
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
FEBRUARY 5 – 7, 2009**

We encourage you to mark your calendar for the 36th Annual Conference of the WSC. The theme of the conference is Crime and Criminal Justice on the Border. The Program Chairs are: Dr. Laurie Kubicek, Division of Criminal Justice, Sacramento State University, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819 and Dr. Aili Malm, Department of Criminal Justice, California State University - Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840. The Call for Papers appears in this issue, but you may also want to contact Dr. Kubicek, Dr. Malm, 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 beautiful San Diego, California!

For the 37th Annual Conference (February 4-6, 2010), we will be back in Honolulu, HI at the Ala Moana Hotel. We had great weather during our last conference there and we're looking forward to the same in 2010! For more information, visit the hotel's website at <http://www.alamoanahotelhonolulu.com/index.cfm>



MIKI'S REFLECTIONS

Miki Vohryzek-Bolden

In the Fall 2007 newsletter, then-President John Vivian talked about his role as an 'embedded' researcher within three Arizona criminal and juvenile justice agencies for over 25 years and how he learned to modify his style to provide policy relevant research. His story resonated with me as I have spent a lot of my professional criminology/criminal justice career in the policy arena or providing research reports for policy makers.

John stated that he saw colleagues struggle unsuccessfully with the constraints posed by the conduct of operational (aka action) research. I, too, have seen many of my colleagues attempt to conduct research for state agencies, only to grow more frustrated and less clear about what we, as academic professionals, can provide to our criminal justice agencies. The bottom-line for many of us is how to retain some semblance of research excellence and sanity in an environment that operates with other rules and timelines.

In this presidential statement, John encouraged the reader, who wants to perform policy relevant work, to keep five principles in mind (my thoughts are in parentheses):

1. Data quality may be more important than the methodological sophistication ('garbage in - garbage out' and simple statistical techniques may provide acceptable answers and be understood by the reader);
2. In an environment where answers are expected immediately, a 'good' answer to a research question may be better than waiting for an 'ideal' answer (the train has already left the station - you can either stand-by and watch or hop on and provide some answers);
3. You are a member of a team where most other members are not trained researchers (this is a situation you will probably always encounter if you consult with state agencies; remember, they 'own' the data and control your access; insulting them by using big words and 'forcing' your academic research methodology on them generally results in conflict; a colleague shared a story that when a Ph.D. was hired as director of research, he was quickly discounted due to his 'academic ways');
4. Research audiences need to be told what our research results mean (Joan Petersilia's presentation as President of the American Society of Criminology addressed the importance of this issue as well as much of what John shared with us in his column; 'less is more' - succinct and clearly written reports are received better than reports replete with 'academic gobbledey-goop');
5. Adhere to the principle of stick-to-itiveness when conducting policy relevant work because over time, you can have a great impact upon policy (if you are not there providing relevant findings, then the policy makers are using whatever is at hand; there is no greater moment than knowing that your research led to policy changes - e.g., my research paper served as the basis for California's adoption of the .10 driving under the influence law that was eventually lowered to .08).

A friend who reviewed this article shared her experience: "State folks do not want to hear that answers are NOT 'yes' or 'no' or 'this works' or 'this does not work.' Most often, we find as researchers that it 'all depends.' Some things work in certain conditions with certain people." I could not have said it better!

I learned first hand about this transition from purely academic research to policy relevant research when I worked for the Assembly Office of Research in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The director told me during my first-year evaluation that he had finally 'broken' me of my academic-style of writing. While at first confused by this assessment, I realized what he was saying – my reports now had more relevance for the legislature because I wrote in a style that could be understood and valued by the policy makers.

I hope John and I have provided you with a lot of 'food for thought' regarding policy relevant research. You can probably already tell that both of us love what we do and have reaped many rewards over the years in this field, in spite of the challenges inherent in this research focus. While I cannot speak for John, I believe that purely academic research published in professional journals is relevant and plays a particularly significant role in our colleges and universities as we expose our students to theories about crime and justice. As a complement to academic research, policy research (published more often as reports rather than journal articles) is also relevant and can assist our policy makers in passing laws that are consistent with what we understand about a particular phenomenon.



In Memory of Elizabeth Piper Deschenes *July 1, 1953 – April 20, 2008*

By Barbara Owen, California State University-Fresno and
Jill Rosenbaum, California State University-Fullerton

Libby Deschenes, a beloved wife, daughter, sister, professor, colleague, athlete, "Hash House" runner and wonderful friend passed away peacefully on April 20, 2008 following a two-year battle with ovarian cancer. She was born to Wilson and Peggy Piper on July 1, 1953 and died at the too-young age of 54. She is survived by her husband, Raymond Deschenes, of Orange, CA. While most criminologists and other professionals know her as Elizabeth Piper Deschenes, her many, many friends knew her as Libby.

After attending Colby College and earning a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, she moved to California, working for several prestigious research organizations. At URSA, UCLA and the Rand Corporation, Libby developed a rigorous research agenda, including program evaluations and studies of drug users, and violent offenders.

In 1994, she made the leap to an academic employment, beginning her 14 year career in the Department of Criminal Justice at California State University, Long Beach. Libby was a true champion of student research and worked tirelessly to mentor her students. She served several terms as Graduate Advisor and shaped the careers of many students who have become professionals themselves.

With her excellent research background, Libby brought increased recognition to her department through her teaching and mentoring skills, her active research and evaluation program, and her many publications and proposals. Her recent accomplishments include expanding the department's graduate program, overseeing the Orange County Drug Court Program, and procuring a large grant for the evaluation of repeat offenders. She brought both a rigorous understanding of advanced statistics and a practical understanding of real world needs.

Libby also contributed greatly to the profession. Many criminologists knew Libby as the editor of *Crime and Delinquency*, a position she held from 2002 until her illness forced her to step down. She served the Western Society of Criminology in many capacities, including President from 2002-2003.

In addition to her stellar accomplishments in academics, she was a life-long swimmer, a successful sprint tri-athlete, trail runner and an active member of the Hash House Harrier running club. In 2001, she completed the Great Wall Half Marathon. A nationally ranked Masters swimmer in 2005, she was voted Irvine Novaquatics Swim Club's Competitor of the Year. She continually amazed everyone by her commitment to fitness and her impressive athletic drive. A beautiful memorial service was held on a warm Sunday morning on April 27, 2008 at the Japanese Garden on the campus of CSULB. Her family and many friends spoke in moving detail, celebrating her life, her friendships and her accomplishments. These comments have been archived at the website:

<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/libbyd>

It is important to remember that Libby was a lot of fun. She was a warm, generous friend and collaborator. Everyone who worked with her became her friend as well as her colleague. We were all lucky to know her.

A Memorial Scholarship in Libby's name is being established through the Western Society of Criminology. This fund will provide support for students traveling to WSC meetings. Contributions should be sent to:

The Elizabeth Deschenes Memorial Fund

Sue Escobar, Secretary/Treasurer
Western Society of Criminology
Division of Criminal Justice
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6085.

Questions regarding the Fund may be sent to Barbara Owen at barbarao@csufresno.edu.



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Western Society of Criminology
36th Annual Conference

Theme – Crime and Criminal Justice on the Border
February 5-7, 2009 • San Diego, CA

❖ Please note that the deadline to send abstracts to topic chairs is October 6, 2008 ❖

<p style="text-align: center;">POLICING</p> <p>Christine Famega Department of Criminal Justice California State University, San Bernardino 5500 University Pkwy San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397 Phone: 909-537-5285 Fax: 909-537-7025 Email: cfamega@csusb.edu</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COURTS</p> <p>Cassia Spohn Arizona State University School of Criminology and Criminal Justice 4701 W. Thunderbird Road Mail Code 3250 Glendale, AZ 85306-4908 Phone: 602-543-0023 Fax: 602-543-6658 Email: Cassia.Spohn@asu.edu</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CORRECTIONS</p> <p>John Vivian Administrator of Research and Development Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections 1624 W. Adams Street Phoenix, AZ 85007 Phone: 602-542-2274 Fax: 602-542-4026 Email: jvivian@azdjc.gov</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">GEOGRAPHY OF CRIME</p> <p>Bryan Kinney Simon Fraser University School of Criminology, Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies (ICURS) 8888 University Dr. Burnaby, BC, CANADA V5A 1S6 Phone: 1-778-782-3892 Email: bkinney@sfu.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RACE, CLASS, GENDER & CRIME</p> <p>Brenda Vogel Department of Criminal Justice California State University, Long Beach 1250 Bellflower Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90840-4603 Phone: 562-985-1894 Fax: 562-985-8086 Email: bvogel@csulb.edu</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JUVENILE JUSTICE</p> <p>Finn-Aage Esbensen Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice University of Missouri-St. Louis 330 Lucas Hall 8001 Natural Bridge Road St. Louis, MO 63121 Phone: 314-516-4619 Email: esbensen@umsl.edu</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IMMIGRATION & INTERNATIONAL ISSUES</p> <p>Christine Curtis School of Public Affairs San Diego State University 5500 Campanile Drive San Diego, CA 92182-4505 Phone: 619-892-3109 Email: chrstinecurtis2@msn.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE</p> <p>Yvette Farmer Division of Criminal Justice California State University, Sacramento 6000 J Street Sacramento, CA 95819-6085 Phone: 916-278-5062 Fax: 916-278-7692 Email: drfarmer@csus.edu</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEORY</p> <p>Leana Bouffard Washington State University 826 Johnson Tower PO Box 644880 Pullman, WA 99164-4880 Phone: 509-335-6135 Email: lbouffard@wsu.edu</p>

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 6, 2009. Information about the Island Palms Hotel & Marina can be found on the hotel website (www.islandpalms.com) or by calling 619-222-0561. To receive the conference rate of \$149+tax, a two night, Saturday inclusive stay is required (Friday/Saturday or Saturday/Sunday). Please indicate that you are with the Western Society of Criminology Annual Conference and provide discount rate code GWSC. This code should also be utilized if making on-line reservations.

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 student scholarships for participation in our annual conference. To be eligible for the June Morrison Award, students must present a paper at next year's annual conference in San Diego. Please submit your application by October 6, 2008, to Bryan Kinney at bkinney@sfu.ca. 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. Additionally, the best paper will be submitted for review to the Western Criminology Review. Abstracts should be submitted to the appropriate topical chair by October 6, 2008 and a final paper should be emailed to Bryan Kinney at bkinney@sfu.ca by January 5, 2009. 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>).



GOOD WRITING BENEFITS EVERYONE

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

The importance of good writing transcends many academic disciplines and is considered a valuable skill in the workplace. Criminal Justice agencies want employees that can write well and expect colleges and universities to help students develop such skills. This is a reasonable expectation; however, there are some issues related to this goal that need to be discussed.

Technology can be both beneficial and detrimental to the writing process. Personal computers help writers correct spelling and grammatical errors, but such features are not enough. They do not help individuals with incorrectly used words that are spelled correctly. Other types of technological advances may also discourage good writing. E-mail etiquette does not require formal writing principles—even when e-mail programs allow the sender to check for spelling and grammatical errors. Written communication via text messaging from cell phones or instant messaging on personal computers have even fewer prescribed standards for users to follow.

The barriers for faculty members requiring writing assignments include increased workloads and student resistance usually in the form of verbal or written complaints. A faculty member's workload is increased by the decision to include work that requires more time to grade such as developmental writing assignments. Increasing class sizes make it difficult to find the time it takes to provide the feedback students need and deserve on their written work—despite a faculty member's desire to include assignments that develop writing skills. Students also resist such assignments by complaining when faculty members evaluate the quality of writing in addition to the content. Such complaints include the idea that only discipline-related content should be the focus of instructor evaluation and the assessment of writing quality should be the domain of English classes.

Despite these circumstances, there are many reasons for including meaningful writing assignments in college and university courses. For students and faculty, it is a reasonable expectation that students will improve their writing skills as they progress through higher education. Faculty members appreciate well-written papers as they increase the pleasure of reading and reduce the burden of grading. Future employers will also appreciate a potential employee's ability to write well since writing professional reports may be an important aspect of his or her job.

There are ways in which instructors can be creative in helping students develop writing skills while keeping manageable workloads. Two suggestions they can use are as follows: 1) require short assignments with revision opportunities; and 2) incorporate a peer review process prior to faculty grading. These two ideas emphasize writing as an evolving process and demonstrate the need for developmental writing practices.

Given the many budget and workload issues that plague colleges and universities, faculty members *can* help students become better writers. Instructors must be committed to this goal and mindful of the issues that make achieving it more difficult. Criminal justice agencies and other potential employers should vocalize their need for employees that possess good writing skills. The idea of graduating students that are unable to write well should be unacceptable—to educators, future employers, and the students themselves. When students write well, everyone benefits.



Double Shift: Graduate Student and Employee

Brandi Vigil, Graduate Student
California State University, Sacramento

No matter the program or the school, a graduate student never fully knows what to expect when entering their first year of graduate school. The only things guaranteed throughout that first year are syllabi, an array of assignments, and the need for adjustments. After recently completing my first year of graduate school in May, the one word I would use to describe it is *chaotic*—I am sure many others would agree. I know my fellow classmates would. Although those 20 page research papers, mid-terms, and finals contributed to my chaotic first year, working full time contributed the rest.

Within the field of Criminal Justice work experience is often considered as valuable as education. For some, work experience overrides education. As a Criminal Justice graduate student I have learned education, coupled with work experience will best prepare me for a future Criminal Justice based career. For this reason, many other graduate students are also employees, juggling work with school. Some students may read this and think, "I have been juggling school with work since I began my undergraduate studies." I, too, worked throughout my undergraduate studies, but would argue that both my educational and work expectations have risen to a higher level, bringing overall pressure to a higher level.

Although important to gain work experience in conjunction with education, problems can arise when both demand high levels of dedication, but time does not allow. What takes precedence, one's job or education? This is a dilemma that almost all graduate students, who are also employees, face daily. With constant demands from both sides, and often at the same times, time management skills are necessary and required to succeed. Due dates for assignments rarely change, and work responsibilities do not disappear, and for this reason a balance between work and school must exist.

So for all you graduate students, who are also employees, continue to strive for your best and challenge yourself both educationally and vocationally. But while doing so pull out your syllabi and your day planners, fill in test dates, and paper assignments along with your staff meetings and hours of work, and most importantly give yourself the time needed to be both a graduate student and an employee.



An invitation to share your thoughts and words...

The scholarly exchange of ideas and experiences that takes place between academics and professionals in Criminology and Criminal Justice enriches all of us. If you feel strongly about a certain topic, would be willing to write about it, and believe that others would enjoy reading it, please consider sending me an article that I can publish in the newsletter. Your thoughts and words may inspire another person and should be sent to Yvette Farmer at drfarmer@csus.edu.



Call for Papers

The Western Criminology Review is the official journal of the Western Society of Criminology, and we invite all presenters to submit their research to the journal. Published twice a year, WCR is an on-line, peer-reviewed outlet for scholarly research in all matters important to criminology and criminal justice. The journal is intended to reflect local (Western), national, and international concerns. Manuscripts are submitted electronically, and all correspondence is conducted online to speed the review process. Due to the advantages of being an online journal, there are no page, color, or appendix restrictions; therefore, authors can include hypertext links and images at their discretion. Our evaluation process of submitted papers involves a brief internal consideration by editorial staff, followed by a blind assessment by at least two external reviewers. Replies and Comments to previously published articles are encouraged. All submissions should be formatted according to the journal's guidelines for manuscripts, which can be found on the WCR website at <http://wcr.sonoma.edu> /. Persons interested in submitting their work to the WCR should send inquiries to Leana Bouffard and Jeffrey Bouffard, Washington State University. Send all new submissions via e-mail as an attachment to wcr@wsu.edu or via postal mail service on a floppy to:

Editor, Western Criminology Review
Criminal Justice Program
Washington State University
PO Box 644880
Pullman, WA 99164-4880
Phone: 509-335-6135
Fax: 509-335-7990

The Western Criminologist
Sue Escobar
Sacramento State University
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6085



Internet Access

President: Adrienne Freng – AFreng@uwyo.edu

Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Escobar – scote@csus.edu

Newsletter Editor: Yvette Farmer - drfarmer@csus.edu

Journal Co-Editors: Leanna Bouffard - lbouffard@wsu.edu

Jeffrey Bouffard - jbouffard@wsu.edu

WSC Webpage: <http://www.sonoma.edu/cja/wsc/wscmain.html>

Membership Information: Laurie Kubicek – lkubicek@csus.edu
