



The Western Criminologist

Spring 2026

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CONTACT US

Western Society of Criminology

c/o California State University, Long Beach
School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, & Emergency Management
1250 Bellflower Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90840

Visit us at <https://westerncriminology.org>
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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dr. Kimberly Kras

San Diego State University
San Diego, CA, United States

Spring is here, and with that comes renewal. I appreciate the opportunity to introduce myself as WSC President for the next year. I am honored to serve in this role with pride and optimism about our organization's growth and future.

Reflecting on our recent conference in Denver, I am energized by the dynamic panels, outstanding student contributions, and the opportunity to honor esteemed scholars in our field. The conference left me reflecting on past and recent events, and in dialogue with colleagues, revering the persistence of our work. Even amid budget constraints and rapid changes within criminal justice, we continue to move forward with purpose. It is this shared commitment that fuels my optimism as we navigate challenges and continue advocating for what is right.

Denver itself was a wonderful host city, offering breathtaking views of the Rockies and a vibrant community. Although my time to explore was limited, I appreciated the fresh mountain air and the warm interactions with locals—many of whom left me with a long list of reasons to return. I left Denver with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to strengthening our scholarly community in the uniquely collaborative spirit that defines WSC.

In this spirit, I recognize the extraordinary efforts of our board, whose dedication makes WSC what it is. I extend my deepest gratitude to our Immediate Past President, Amin Asfari; our Executive Director, Christine Scott-Hayward—the backbone of WSC; and our outstanding Program Chair, Brooke Nodeland, along with Co-Chairs Carlana Orosco and Andrea Giuffre, for delivering such a successful conference. I am also sincerely grateful to our Officers, Executive Counselors, Counselors-at-Large, and the editors of *The Western Criminologist* newsletter and our journal, *Criminology*, *Criminal Justice*, *Law & Society*. Your collective efforts ensure that WSC remains a vibrant space for rigorous scholarship and meaningful engagement.

As I begin my presidency, I am focused on two priorities that I believe will expand our reach and impact. First, I am deeply committed to supporting students and fostering their development. Students are central to the WSC experience, and our identity as a student-friendly conference is something we proudly uphold. In the coming year, we will build on this foundation by enhancing the student experience, drawing on feedback from our post-conference survey and the work of our dedicated San Diego State University Student Ambassadors to create an even more engaging and supportive environment for emerging scholars at WSC 2027.

Second, I am committed to elevating and integrating the voices of individuals with lived system experience into our scholarly community. This work is essential to ensuring that research has meaningful, real-world impact. By connecting theory and empirical evidence with lived experience, we can strengthen the feedback loops that inform practice, deepen our understanding of harm, and support pathways toward healing and restoration. Even more, I am extremely excited to welcome everyone to San Diego for the 2027 Annual Meeting. Known for its sun, sea, and surf, San Diego is also one of the most biodiverse regions in the United States and home to the world-renowned San Diego Zoo. Our city offers something for everyone—from beaches and mountains to

desert landscapes. It is also home to outstanding universities, community colleges, criminal justice agencies, and nonprofit organizations. We're also a border community with Mexico where many community members, including students, cross daily to engage in the meaningful work that embraces and expands our multiculturalism.

We hope that alongside the conference, you will take time to experience all that San Diego has to offer—its coastline, cultural diversity, and vibrant neighborhoods. I encourage you to explore Balboa Park and its museums, visit the zoo, enjoy our beaches (our Student Ambassadors will happily share their favorites), and take in the Embarcadero and Seaport Village, just a short walk from the conference site. A few of my personal favorites include the Little Italy Farmers Market on Saturdays and, whenever possible, time out on the water. I am deeply honored to serve as your President this year. In the spirit of continued growth, I invite you to reach out directly and share your thoughts and experiences—dialogue is a cornerstone of progress, and WSC is just the place for it.

I look forward to seeing in San Diego!

Dr. Kimberly Kras
School of Public Affairs
San Diego State University
kkras@sdsu.edu

REQUEST FOR DONATIONS: WSC STUDENT AWARDS

As you may know, the WSC welcomes and encourages student participation at our annual conference, and we have created several cash awards to support students attending and presenting at WSC. We have long had the Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition and the June Morrison Scholarship Fund (a travel award). In 2025, we added a travel award for Justice System-Impacted Students. [More information about each award is available on our website.](#)

In the past, we have used general funds as well as proceeds from the Book Exhibit to fund these awards, but in recent years, the book exhibit proceeds have declined, and we have expanded our award offerings, which has put pressure on our finances. For these reasons, the WSC Board voted to solicit contributions to a scholarship fund that will support all three of our awards.

If you are able, we would be grateful if you could contribute to this fund. All donations are tax-deductible, and you can obtain an official donation receipt by emailing Treasurer@WesternCriminology.org. Donations can be made by visiting https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=H99SPUE3HQSJ6 or scanning the QR code below:



You can also make donations by check, made by payable to The Western Society of Criminology and mailed to:

Attn: Christine Scott-Hayward
School of CCJEM, CSULB
1250 Bellflower Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90840

Thank you for your support of WSC!

FROM THE EDITOR



Dr. Sarah Yercich

Capilano University
North Vancouver, BC, Canada

Welcome to the spring 2026 issue of *The Western Criminologist*! The 2026 Annual Conference was a great success! A key feature of this newsletter is an overview of the winners of the 2026 WSC awards and the student awards. Take a moment to read about the recipients and their important contributions to criminology. Congratulations to all the winners!

I am particularly excited to share two features with you in this newsletter! Enclosed in this edition is a *WSC Member Feature* authored by Connor MacMillan, which is a commentary on anger, violence, and the far-right, and the inaugural *Teaching and Learning in Criminology* piece written by one of my mentors, Dr. Sheri Fabian.

There are a few important deadlines to keep in mind:

- **Seeking a new editor for CCJLS** – applications due no later than Wednesday, July 1, 2026.
- **Award nominations** – submissions for the WSC awards are due no later than 5pm PST on Tuesday, June 2, 2026.
- **Student awards** – submissions for the *June Morrison Scholarship Fund* (travel award), *Travel Award for Justice System-Impacted Students*, and *Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition* are due no later than 5:00pm PST on Friday, September 25, 2026.
- **2027 conference abstract submission** – are you interested in presenting at the WSC 2027 Annual Conference? The abstract submission portal is open between July 1 and September 19, 2026.

I hope to see you all in San Diego, California, in 2027 and am excited to welcome you to Canada for our 2028 conference in Calgary, Alberta!

AN INVITATION TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

As newsletter editor, my aim is to amplify the work of WSC members by expanding the *WSC Member Feature* and *Teaching and Learning in Criminology* sections. The focus of community features is to translate and mobilize knowledge related to criminology and criminal justice, including, but by no means limited to, opinion pieces and commentaries, research, the scholarship of teaching and learning, creative expression like artwork, and emerging and innovative practices, programs, and tools. I would like to invite practitioners, academics, and those with lived experience in the field of criminology and criminal justice to consider sharing your work and/or contributing your thoughts on a topic that is of interest to you and the WSC readership to be included in the Fall 2026 issue of our newsletter. Please send your contributions and/or questions to:

Dr. Sarah Yercich
Criminology Department and Sociology Department
Capilano University
sarahyercich@capilanou.ca

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS!

Henry F. Fradella

Paul Tappan Award

To honor outstanding contributions to the field of criminology

Henry F. Fradella is a professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University, where he also serves as an affiliate professor of law and the director of the School of Interdisciplinary Forensics. He earned a B.A. in psychology from Clark University, a master's in forensic science and a J.D. from The George Washington University, and a Ph.D. in justice studies from Arizona State University.

Dr. Fradella's scholarship examines the dynamics of legal decision-making and the evolution of substantive and procedural criminal and constitutional law. He is the author or co-author of 14 books, including: *The Law of Interrogations and Confessions* (W.B. Sheridan), *LGBTQ+ Issues in Criminology and Criminal Justice* (Routledge), *Sex and Privacy in American Law* (Academica), *Punishing Poverty: How Bail and Pretrial Detention Fuel Inequalities in the Criminal Justice System* (UC Press), *Stop and Frisk: The Use and Abuse of a Controversial Police Tactic* (NYU Press), *Sex, Sexuality, Law, and (In)Justice* (Routledge), *Mental Illness and Crime* (Sage), *Defenses of Excuse in American Law* (Academica), and six textbooks published by Oxford University Press and Cengage. He has also published approximately 135 articles, book chapters, reviews, and commentaries in scholarly and public outlets.

Before entering academia, Dr. Fradella worked in both the private and public sectors, including as a federal judicial law clerk and as an attorney. He has a long history of service to the WSC, having served as executive counselor, vice president, president, immediate past president, and executive director, as well as co-editor of *Criminology*, *Criminal Justice*, *Law & Society* from 2013 to 2016.

Dr. Fradella's scholarship successfully reaches scholars, judges, and policymakers. His work has been cited by nearly 30 federal and state courts. The Second Circuit, as well as the Connecticut and Utah supreme courts, have relied on his scholarship in establishing rules concerning the admissibility of expert testimony on the unreliability of eyewitness identifications.

The U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Seventh and Ninth Circuits cited his work on defenses of excuse when setting standards for attorney performance in insanity defense cases. And in 2016, the highest criminal court in Texas overturned a capital conviction, citing Dr. Fradella's scholarship to support the proposition that the contents of text messages could not be obtained without a warrant supported by probable cause—marking the first time any appellate court cited empirical scholarship to affirm that society recognizes Fourth Amendment protection for the content of text messages.

For his scholarly impact on the development of law and public policy and his outstanding contributions to the field of criminology, Dr. Fradella is well-deserving of the WSC's Tappan Award.



Katherine Roberts

June Morrison – Tom Gitchoff Founders Award

To honor a person who, through scholarship and/or activism, has significantly improved the quality of justice



Katherine Roberts is Director of the Graduate Program in Criminalistics at California State University, Los Angeles, and Executive Director of the California Forensic Science Institute (CFSI). She earned her doctorate in Forensic Science from the City University of New York and combines academic expertise with extensive administrative and program development experience. She also founded the Center for Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Research to promote collaboration across scientific disciplines.

Dr. Roberts collaborates with the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner– Coroner’s Human Genomics Unit to evaluate phenotype and biogeographical ancestry markers using Next-Generation DNA Sequencing and to develop new forensic applications for fluorescence-activated cell sorting. She also partners with faculty and industry on projects involving fingerprint donor aging, activity-level propositions, and trace evidence analysis, all grounded in advanced DNA sequencing.

As principal investigator on multiple U.S. Department of Justice grants—including from the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance—Dr. Roberts leads a BJA-funded project focused on post-conviction DNA testing in collaboration with the Los Angeles Innocence Project at Cal State LA (LAIP). Through this unique partnership—fusing legal advocacy and forensic science training—the CFSI-LAIP team reviews violent felony cases, locates biological evidence, and conducts DNA analyses that support exoneration and strengthen procedural justice.

As a dedicated educator, she continues to teach in the criminalistics graduate program and has mentored more than 150 student thesis projects. Her research is widely published in leading peer-reviewed journals and frequently presented at national and international conferences. Dr. Roberts’s activities have significantly improved the quality of justice for people in Los Angeles.

Alyssa Chamberlain

Fellows Award

To honor a person generally associated with the western region who has made important contributions to the field of criminology

Alyssa Chamberlain is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University. She earned her Ph.D. in Criminology, Law and Society from the University of California, Irvine and her research broadly focuses on understanding the structural forces that shape the geographic distribution of crime. Two central themes emerge from her body of work: the spatial and temporal dynamics of neighborhood change, and the interrelationship between neighborhood structure, prisoner reentry, and recidivism.

A key focus of Dr. Chamberlain’s scholarship is understanding how changes in neighborhood structure contribute to crime and why crime persists in certain places over time. Her work builds on existing studies of neighborhood sociodemographic



characteristics by incorporating often-overlooked factors, such as the community-level consequences of mass incarceration. While excluding these factors may have been reasonable when incarceration and supervision rates were low, nearly fifty years into the U.S. prison boom, accounting for the impact of returning prisoners on neighborhood dynamics has become essential. She makes the innovative argument that the concentration of formerly incarcerated individuals represents a distinct form of neighborhood disadvantage—one that contributes to higher crime and recidivism rates while destabilizing communities through increased vacancies and disrupted property sales.

Her research offers a more nuanced understanding of how understudied populations, such as former prisoners, influence neighborhoods. It extends beyond traditional factors like instability and race to reveal both direct and indirect effects on local crime patterns. Dr. Chamberlain also investigates how neighborhood context differentially affects offending across race/ethnicity, sex, and the intersection of the two. She has found, for instance, that economic disadvantage disproportionately impacts female offenders, and that family structural factors—such as caregiving burdens and single-parent households—are more relevant for understanding female, as opposed to male, intragroup violence. She has also examined how gender affects the spatial aspects of offending, finding that it likely shapes perceptions of the risks and rewards of criminal behavior.

This work underscores the importance of considering how intersecting dimensions of race, sex, and place shape the relationship between neighborhood structure and criminal behavior. Dr. Chamberlain employs a range of advanced methodological tools, including spatial analysis, multilevel and longitudinal modeling, structural equation modeling, and geographic information systems (GIS). She has published nearly 40 peer-reviewed articles in leading journals across criminology, sociology, and urban studies. Her work has received national media attention, including coverage by NPR and The Atlantic, and has contributed meaningfully to public discourse on incarceration, reentry, and community well-being.

Finally, beyond her scholarly contributions, Dr. Chamberlain has also provided dedicated service to the Western Society of Criminology, serving as the Chair of the Awards committee for many years. For her substantial contributions to criminology, the WSC recognizes her with its Fellows Award.

Kwan-Lamar Blount-Hill

W.E.B. DuBois Award

For significant contributions to advancing awareness of racial and ethnic issues in criminology and criminal justice



Kwan-Lamar Blount-Hill is an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Arizona State University (ASU). He earned his law degree from Emory University in 2011 and his Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from the City University of New York in 2020.

Dr. Blount-Hill's research centers on group psychology within criminological contexts, with a particular focus on how racial and ethnic identities shape perceptions of justice and injustice. His work also explores formal, organized group processes—especially the institutionalization of norms and practices within police organizations. For example, he has provided evidence of institutionalized impression management in Missouri police departments (Craig & Blount-Hill, 2022), as well as institutionalized disregard for lesbian police identities (Moton et al., 2020) and for civilians from racial or ethnic minority communities (Headley & Blount-Hill, 2021; JonesBrown et al., 2020; Jones-Brown & Blount-Hill, 2020).

Dr. Blount-Hill has already made significant contributions to the field. He has co-edited two books and authored over 10 book chapters, 34 peer-reviewed journal articles and commentaries, several law review articles, and numerous pieces of public criminology. His research is frequently published in leading criminology journals such as *Justice Quarterly*, *Crime & Delinquency*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, and *Journal of Family Violence*. Notably, his interdisciplinary reach includes high-impact journals in related fields, such as the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Conservation Biology*, *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*.

An industrious and forward-thinking scholar, Dr. Blount-Hill has made meaningful contributions to our understanding of police-community relations, criminal stigma, and inclusive criminology. His work has important implications for policy and practice, particularly in promoting social justice and improving public trust in law enforcement.

Given the breadth and impact of his contributions, Dr. Blount-Hill is a deserving recipient of the W.E.B. Du Bois Award.

Vera Lopez

Meda Chesney-Lind Award

For significant contributions to scholarship or activism on the intersection of women and crime

Vera Lopez is a Professor of Women and Gender Studies and Associate Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University (ASU). She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology (School/Clinical Child specialization) from the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Lopez applies a critical lens to examine how Latina girls' intersecting social positions shape their experiences within youth-serving institutions, including the juvenile justice system, residential treatment facilities, and schools. Her work is distinguished by its intersectional, feminist approach to understanding systems of social control and the lived experiences of marginalized youth.

Her book, *Complicated Lives: Girls, Parents, Drugs, and Juvenile Justice* (Rutgers University Press), received the Intersectional Book Award from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Women & Crime in 2019. She has also co-authored or co-edited two other influential books: *Latinas in the Criminal Justice System: Victims, Targets, and Offenders* (NYU Press, with Lisa Pasko) and *Adolescent Girls' Sexualities and the Media* (Peter Lang, with Kate Harper, Yasmina Katsulis, and Georganne Scheiner Gillis).

Her scholarship has appeared in a wide range of respected journals, including *Crime & Delinquency*, *Feminist Criminology*, *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Latino Studies*, *Violence Against Women*, and *Women & Health*, and *Youth & Society*, among others.

Dr. Lopez's recent research includes a youth participatory action research (YPAR) project with system-impacted girls, funded by the Spencer Foundation, and a study on Latina girls in sports, funded by the ASU Global Sport Institute. Both projects reflect her commitment to community-engaged, equity-focused scholarship.

She currently serves as Co-Editor of *Feminist Criminology* and as Associate Editor of *Sociology Compass*, further demonstrating her leadership in the field. Dr. Lopez's decades-long dedication to improving the lives of adolescent girls—particularly Latinas impacted by systems of social control—exemplifies the spirit of the Meda Chesney-Lind Award. Her scholarly impact, mentorship, and advocacy make her a highly deserving recipient of this honour.



Emily Lenning

Richard Tewksbury Award

For significant contributions to scholarship or activism on the intersection of crime and sexuality



Emily Lenning is a Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Fayetteville State University. She holds a B.A. in Sociology and Criminal Justice, an M.S. in Sociology, and a Ph.D. in Sociology with an emphasis in criminology and gender/feminism. Dr. Lenning's scholarship spans a diverse range of topics, including LGBTQ+ issues in the criminal legal system, media representations of crime and justice, state-sanctioned violence, and creative pedagogy. Her most recognized work is the co-authored book *Queer Criminology* (now in its second edition), which received the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice Book Award in 2016. In addition to several books, Dr. Lenning has authored numerous book chapters and dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles, with her work appearing in respected outlets such as the *British Journal of Criminology*, *Homicide Studies*, and *Critical Criminology*.

Beyond her scholarly contributions, Dr. Lenning is deeply engaged in service to her university, her community, and the broader discipline. She co-founded Fayetteville's "Safe Zone" office, making it the third HBCU in the country to establish a center dedicated to supporting LGBTQ+ students. She has served on the Executive Boards of Fayetteville PRIDE, the Rape Crisis Volunteers of Cumberland County, the ASC Division on Queer Criminology, and the ASC Division on Women & Crime/Feminist Criminology. Dr. Lenning has also lent her expertise as a consultant for the television show *Forensic Files*, the Indiana Department of Corrections Transitional Healthcare Program, and Lambda Legal. For her sustained and impactful contributions to scholarship and activism at the intersection of crime and sexuality, Dr. Lenning is a highly deserving candidate for the WSC's Richard Tewksbury Award.

Christopher Totten

Henry F. Fradella Award

For significant contributions to empirical scholarship on the legal aspects of criminal justice

Christopher Totten is a Professor of Criminal Justice in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Kennesaw State University (KSU). He teaches and researches on the legal aspects of criminal justice, focusing on criminal law and procedure; international criminal courts and adjudication; and criminal law and society, focusing on police attitudes toward criminal law and procedure. He blends legal methods and empirical social science methods (especially content analysis) cases, publishing nearly 60 articles in leading journals including *the Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, *New Criminal Law Review*, *U.C. Berkeley Journal of International Law*, *Criminal Law Bulletin*, *University of San Francisco Law Review*, *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law*, *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, *Catholic University Law Review*, *Lewis & Clark Law Review*, *Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights*, *Missouri Law Review*, *Fordham International Law Journal*, *Washington University Global Studies Law Review*, and *the NYU Journal of Law and Liberty*. He is also the coauthor



of the book, *Criminal Procedure for the Criminal Justice Professional*. He has been honored with several awards at KSU for both his research and mentorship of students in research. In addition, Dr. Totten has been a contributing editor of *Criminal Law* for 14 years and has served as an editorial board member of the WSC's journal, *Criminology*, *Criminal Justice*, *Law and Society* (CCJLS) since its inception.

Nicholas Perez

Joseph D. Lohman Award

To honor a person who has provided outstanding service to the Western Society of Criminology



Nicholas Perez is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management at Long Beach State University. His main areas of specialization include policing, the development of delinquent behavior, opioid and prescription drug abuse, and hazing violence.

His recent research includes a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) grant focused on identifying and disrupting fentanyl distribution networks in Long Beach. This project employs social network and spatial analysis to identify both high-level fentanyl distributors for investigation and prosecution, and low-level dealers for referral to services. Previously, Dr. Perez worked on a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant analyzing opioid prescription data in California and a California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) grant evaluating the impact of community policing efforts in the city of Long Beach.

In addition to his teaching and scholarship, Dr. Perez has been an active member of the Western Society of Criminology for nearly ten years. He has served as the Board's Secretary from 2021 through 2025, managing communications with the Society's members and supporting the organization of its annual conference. For his years of dedicated service to the Western Society of Criminology, Dr. Perez is a deserving recipient of the Lohman Award.

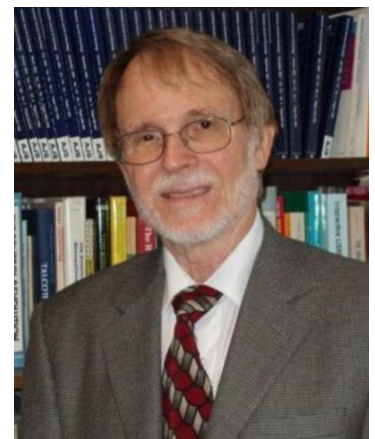
Charles Tittle

President's Award

For contributions to the field of criminology and positive influence on the current WSC President's career

Charles Tittle (1938-2021) was an American criminologist who taught at Indiana University, Florida Atlantic University, Washington State University, and North Carolina State University. Dr. Tittle spent his career illuminating the theoretical intricacies and empirical properties of social control. His early work focused on deterrence and the mechanisms through which sanctions affect behavior. This work, coupled with Charles' interests in theory testing, measurement and integration, inspired his control-balance theory. The resulting book, *Control Balance: Toward a General Theory of Deviance* (1995), won the American Society of Criminology's (ASC) Michael J. Hindelang Award and the American Sociological Association's (ASA) Albert J. Reiss Distinguished Scholarship Award.

In the following years, Charles made significant contributions to cross-national research on causes of crime in understudied socio-cultural contexts around the



globe. Charles published several books and his many articles (often co-authored with graduate students and junior faculty whom he mentored over the years) appeared in the discipline's top journals, including *Criminology*, a journal for which he served for five years as editor (1992-1997). In this role he helped to cement *Criminology* as the premier outlet for cutting-edge, theory-driven criminological scholarship. In recognition of his contributions, he was inducted as a fellow of the ASC and received ASC's Edwin Sutherland Award for a career of distinguished scholarship. Through his intellectual rigor, generosity as a mentor, and lasting influence on theory, research, and professional leadership, Charles Tittle profoundly shaped generations of scholars and the discipline of criminology, making him richly deserving of this award.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2026 STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS!

June Morrison Travel Award

Malia Kohls

San Diego State University



Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition

Amelia Roskin-Frazee

University of California, Irvine



RUN FOR ELECTION TO THE WSC EXECUTIVE BOARD

This year, the Western Society of Criminology will elect three Executive Counselors to serve three-year terms. And, each year, the WSC also elects one person to serve three consecutive years in the offices of Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President, respectively.

Board Members:

- Form the policies of the WSC;
- Determine the date, location, and general program of the Annual Meeting;
- Ratify the budget for the WSC;
- Review the accounts and disbursements of the WSC;
- Act on resolutions submitted by the Resolution Committee;
- Coordinate a book exhibit to raise scholarship funds for students each year;
- Select editors for our journal, *Criminology*, *Criminal Justice*, *Law & Society*; and,
- Select award recipients from the slate of people nominated by the general membership of the Society.

We hope that you will choose to get more involved with the WSC by running for election to the Board! Nominations, including self-nominations, are welcome. Please contact Dr. Peter Hanink, Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, for more information:

Dr. Peter Hanink
Sociology Department
CalPoly, Pomona
909-869-4832
pahanink@cpp.edu

CALL FOR WSC AWARD NOMINATIONS

We invite you to nominate a deserving person for a WSC award.

Nominations for each of the following WSC Awards are currently being accepted:

- **Paul Tappan Award** for outstanding contribution to the field of criminology.
- **Fellows Award** conferred upon individuals generally associated with the Western region who have made important contributions to the field of criminology.
- **W.E.B. DuBois Award** for significant contributions to the field of racial and ethnic issues in criminology.
- **Meda Chesney-Lind Award** for significant contributions to the intersection of gender, crime, and justice.
- **Richard Tewksbury Award** for significant contributions to the intersection of sexuality, crime, and justice.
- **Henry F. Fradella Award** for significant contributions to empirical scholarship on the legal aspects of criminal justice
- **Joseph D. Lohman Award** for outstanding service contributions to the Western Society of Criminology.
- **President's Award** for contributions to the field of criminology and positive influence on the current WSC president's career.

Neither the nominator nor the nominee needs to be a member of the WSC.

The deadline for submissions for each of these awards is Tuesday, June 2, by 5:00pm PST.

Please submit your nomination via the WSC online submission portal
<https://westerncriminology.org/awards/nominate-someone-for-an-award/>

If you have questions, please email the Chairperson of the Awards Committee:

Dr. Khadija Monk
kmonk2@calstatela.edu

CALL FOR WSC STUDENT AWARD APPLICATIONS

Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition

Students are invited to compete in the Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition sponsored by WSC each year. Appropriate types of papers include, but are not limited to, policy analyses, original research, literature reviews, position papers, theoretical papers, and scholarly commentaries. We encourage all students to apply, but preference will be given to students who have not previously received an award. Please note that papers co-authored by faculty will not be considered.

Eligibility: Any student currently enrolled full-time or part-time in an academic degree program at either the undergraduate or graduate level is eligible to submit a paper. Students from all majors are eligible; however, all entries must be related to criminology, criminal justice, or criminal law and society. Papers must not exceed 30 pages, including abstract, text, references, tables and figures, notes, et cetera. Papers exceeding this limit will not be considered. Papers must be double-spaced, typed in 12-point font on pages using one-inch margins, and conform to a standard format for the organization of papers and citation (e.g. APA, ASA, Bluebook). The WSC Awards Committee is responsible for evaluating papers meeting the guidelines described above.

Award Prize: Students selected for this award will be recognized at the WSC's annual conference; will receive a reimbursement of student conference fees (less membership dues); and will receive a cash award of between \$125 and \$250 for first place, depending on whether the paper was sole-authored or co-authored. Additionally, if the award recipient desires, the best paper will be submitted for review to the journal of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*. In rare circumstances, a cash award of up to \$100 may be awarded to a second place paper. Please note that the cash award must be used to fund travel or hotel expenses for the award recipient to attend the WSC conference. An award winner who does not attend the conference will not receive the cash stipend.

Please Note: The paper that students submit to compete in Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition need not be the same paper that they present at the conference. We recognize that conference presentations may be works in progress or may be a result of joint efforts with faculty mentors. In contrast, papers submitted for the Student Paper Competition must be completed papers that were written by a student (or co-authored by two or more students) without the assistance of faculty. Papers are welcome from students matriculated at any college or university anywhere in the world, but preference will be given to students who have not previously received an award.

Note: Please use "Student Paper Competition" in the header of your e-mail.

E-mail the information to Dr. Khadija Monk
kmonk2@calstatela.edu

by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, September 25, 2026

Winners will be notified in writing by November 6, 2026

Travel Award for Justice System-Impacted Students

About the Travel Award: The WSC recognizes the ongoing barriers that justice system-impacted individuals face in accessing academic and professional spaces. To support such access, the WSC provides funds to support the costs of justice system-impacted students who are attending and presenting a paper or poster at the annual conference. Please note that this scholarship is not related to the Student Paper Competition. This year, one student award will be given in the amount of \$300.

Eligibility: This award is open to undergraduate and graduate students who are currently or formerly justice system-impacted and enrolled full-time or part-time in an academic degree program. Applicants must be presenting a paper or a poster at the annual WSC.

How to Apply: E-mail the following information to the chairperson of the Awards Committee, Dr. Khadija Monk:

1. Your résumé or curriculum vitae (CV); and
2. A cover letter indicating that you are applying for the award. This cover letter must contain all of the following information:
 - a. Your full contact information, including name, address, phone number, and e-mail address;
 - b. The name of your college or university, as well as the school or department housing the degree program in which the student is enrolled;
 - c. Whether you are matriculated in a graduate or undergraduate program;
 - d. The title of your paper or poster presentation;
 - e. A brief explanation of how attending and presenting at the conference will be valuable to your educational or career development (including how the presentation fits into your broader education, research, or career interests); and
 - f. A brief discussion of your funding need, including a summary of other funding sources available to you, if any.

Note: Please use "System-Impacted Travel Award" in the header of your e-mail.

Email the information to Dr. Khadija Monk
kmonk2@calstatela.edu

by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, September 25, 2026

Winners will be notified in writing by November 6, 2026

June Morrison Scholarship Fund

Using money raised from the Book Exhibit, the June Morrison Scholarship Fund provides supplemental funds to help defray the cost of student members' participation at the annual meeting, provided that they are presenting papers at the conference. Typically, one or two awards are made to students attending the annual meeting of the WSC. The amount of the awards varies by year (usually between \$200 and \$300), depending on the sales of books at the Book Exhibit the prior year. Please note that this scholarship is not related to the Student Paper Competition. We encourage all students to apply, but preference will be given to students who have not previously received an award.

Eligibility: All students currently enrolled full-time or part-time in an academic degree program at either the undergraduate or graduate level are eligible to apply for this award, provided that they are presenting one or more papers at the annual conference. Conference registration and student membership dues must be paid prior to the scholarship being awarded.

Submission Requirements:

1. A résumé or curriculum vitae
2. A cover letter, indicating your intent to apply for the award, including the following information:
 - a. Your full contact information, including your name, address, phone number, and email address;
 - b. The name of your college or university, as well as the school or program housing the degree program in which you are enrolled;
 - c. Whether you are matriculated in a graduate or undergraduate program;
 - d. The title of your paper presentation;
 - e. A summary of other funding sources available to you, if any;
 - f. A brief explanation of how conference attendance will be valuable to your career development (including how it will relate to future career plans); and
 - g. A brief summary of how your presentation fits into your larger research trajectory (i.e., what, if any, are your plans for the project you intend to present at the conference, such as use in project, thesis, or dissertation; submission for publication to a specific journal; etc.).
3. An e-mail message from a faculty sponsor from your school to the Chairperson of the Awards Committee, Dr. Khadija Monk, indicating their support of your request for travel funds.

Note: Please use "June Morrison Travel Award" in the header of your e-mail.

E-mail the information to Dr. Khadija Monk
kmonk2@calstatela.edu

by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, September 25, 2026

Winners will be notified in writing by November 6, 2026

2027 CONFERENCE: CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

WESTERN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY CALL FOR ABSTRACTS



2027 Annual Conference
February 4-6, 2027

The Westin San Diego Bayview
San Diego, CA

1501 Columbia St.
San Diego, CA 92101

People wishing to present at the conference will be able to submit proposals through our online [abstract submission system](#) between July 1 and September 19, 2026. We encourage the submission of complete panels of four (4) papers.

Panel Topics

- APPLIED CRIME AND JUSTICE
- COURTS AND JUDICIAL PROCESSES (INCLUDING SENTENCING)
- LEGAL ISSUES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE (CRIMINAL LAW, CRIMINAL PROCEDURE, & EVIDENCE)
- CORRECTIONS
- CRIME ANALYSIS (INCLUDING GEOGRAPHY & CRIME AND SOCIAL NETWORKS & CRIME)
- RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES
- CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY
- DRUGS/SUBSTANCE ABUSE & CRIME
- FORENSIC SCIENCE
- INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY AND PRACTICE
- JUVENILE JUSTICE & JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
- ORGANIZED CRIME & GANGS
- CYBERCRIME
- PEACEMAKING CRIMINOLOGY
- CONVICT CRIMINOLOGY
- POLICING
- SEX CRIMES
- TEACHING & ASSESSMENT IN JUSTICE EDUCATION
- TERRORISM
- WHITE COLLAR CRIME
- SEX, GENDER, SEXUALITY, & CRIME
- RACE & ETHNICITY
- CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY

In deciding the most appropriate topic area for your abstract, think about the main focus of your paper or presentation and how it might fit within a panel organized around a larger topical theme. 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 submit it to the topic area in which you think it fits best.

All presenters are asked to submit an abstract of no more than 1100 characters. In addition to the abstract, please include the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number for all authors on the submission for the participant directory. Please note that all presenters are required to preregister and prepay the nonrefundable conference fees no later than December 7, 2026. Failure to do so will result in presentations being removed from the final program.

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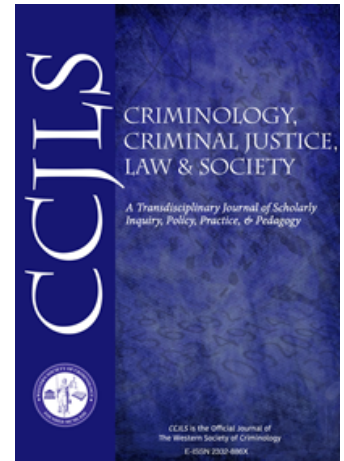


CCJLS: CALL FOR PAPERS

Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society (CCJLS) is the official journal of the Western Society of Criminology and one of the only diamond open access journals in the field. This open-access, peer-reviewed journal builds on the mission of its predecessor, *Western Criminology Review (WCR)*, by promoting understanding of the causes of crime; the methods used to prevent and control crime; the institutions, principles, and actors involved in the apprehension, prosecution, punishment, and reintegration of offenders; and the legal and political framework under which the justice system and its primary actors operate.

CCJLS invites all of the following:

- theoretical and empirical research on criminology, criminal justice, and criminal law and society;
- practice-oriented papers (including teaching/pedagogical issues);
- essays and commentary on crime, law, and justice policy;
- replies and comments to articles previously published in *CCJLS* or *WCR*;
- book, film reviews, and scholarly article reviews; and
- historical and contemporary perspectives are encouraged, as are diverse theoretical and methodological approaches.



Manuscripts must be submitted electronically through the journal's portal on [Scholastica](#). Submissions should be formatted according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition (2020)*. All correspondence is conducted online to speed the review process. There are no page, color, or appendix restrictions, although a 30-page upper limit for the body of papers is recommended. Additionally, authors may, at their discretion, include images (in .jpg. or .gif formats), as well as hyperlinks to web pages, source documents, YouTube videos, and similar multimedia materials on the Internet to take full advantage of the digital nature of the journal. Our evaluation process involves an internal review by editorial staff, followed by a blind assessment by two external reviewers. Inquiries about *CCJLS* should be directed to the Interim Editor, Christine Scott-Hayward, at christine.scott-hayward@csulb.edu.

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SEEKING NEW EDITOR FOR CCJLS



New Editor Sought for *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*

The Western Society of Criminology (WSC) invites applications for the position of Editor(s) of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*, (CCJLS), the official journal of the Society. It is anticipated that new manuscript submissions will transfer to the new Editor around January 2027 for a three-year term. CCJLS is a Diamond Open Access journal, meaning that it is free to read and publish in. WSC covers the cost of submissions for authors, and all articles are publicly available on the [journal's website](#).

The Editor is responsible for the timely and substantive publication of the journal, including the solicitation of manuscripts, supervision of the peer-review process, selection of articles for publication, and the final publication process (including proofreading and typesetting). The WSC supports this process by paying for the following expenses: CCJLS's manuscript submission and processing system (Scholastica) and copy-editing. The Editor's supporting institution might propose to provide funds to cover graduate student assistance and/or release time for the Editor.

We encourage interested applicants to contact the Interim Editor, Christine Scott-Hayward, with any questions or for additional information regarding the logistics or operational details of editing and producing the journal or to discuss their application before submission. Application materials should include (1) a statement of editorial philosophy, (2) *curriculum vitae* of all proposed personnel, and (3) assurances and details of any institutional support. Application materials should be sent **by email** to:

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Applications must be received by **July 1, 2026**.

WSC MEMBER FEATURE

When the Trump(et) sounds: A commentary on anger, violence, and the far-right

Connor MacMillan, Ph.D. Candidate

Introduction

There is anger and resentment among the far-right, and there is a growing divide within nations between those who situate themselves on the left of the socio-political spectrum and those who lean ever more towards the far-right. We often only take notice when the rift is so great that the far-right's anger creates a space for a despot to take up the call, a person willing to wield the anger and make calls for violence, often towards those most vulnerable. However, the anger remains firmly within the populace, as the despot is only capable of fueling and wielding the emotions of the far-right, since they are not the instigators but the mere symptoms of social unease. For instance, Donald Trump has taken up the voices of the far-right within the United States. This rhetoric is predicated on advancing the fear and hate of the far-right, those who believe their needs and rights have allegedly been infringed upon by marginalized groups who they feel are now prioritized over the largely white base (Hochschild, 2016). A sense of aggrieved entitlement emanates from the far-right who see their dream of success and achievement within the capitalist system being robbed from them and given to newcomers whom the far-right believes have not put in the time and hard work (Hochschild, 2016). While the far-right is eager to blame racially marginalized groups, they fail to notice that the source of their anger is actually the very despot themselves, as well as the withering democratic institution that has steadily unwound those systems of support that they have relied upon for decades (e.g., social services).

Meritocracy and Colour-Blindness

In countries like the United States, there has long been an unspoken promise of success, if only an individual works hard enough and perseveres (i.e., a meritocracy). This is the promise of the American Dream, a meritocratic principle of individual worth that obscures the social, economic, and political systems that structure access to opportunities (Hickel & Khan, 2012). The promise of meritocratic success is a tenet of individual freedoms, a beacon that says any individual can step into the upper echelons of society, regardless of socio-economic origins, if they work hard enough. The prevalence of meritocracy coincides with the rise of individualism, which displaces ideologies of collective best interest that tend to support the promotion and maintenance of social services, such as healthcare and forms of financial aid (Bromley, 2019; Cullen, 2003; David, 2007; Hickel & Khan, 2012). More detrimental is the belief in the existence of a race-neutral society, or that of a color-blind ideology in which people assume that the structures of dispossession and oppression have long been eradicated, making all equal regardless of skin colour (Bonilla-Silva, 2021; Goldberg, 2002). Colour-blindness obscures the existence of systemic structures that perpetuate white privilege and, subsequently, the barriers to equitable opportunities for racially marginalized individuals. As such, there exists a belief for many, especially those who possess racial privilege, that society is equal and only through meritocracy can an individual gain socio-economic success. That is, the idea of meritocracy is like an opiate that provides hope and the promise of success predicated on individual worth, while simultaneously obscuring the harsh reality of structured access to socio-economic opportunity (Benke, 2023; Cullen, 2003).

Anger and Resentment in the Far-Right

For decades, the white working class of the United States has benefited from the dividends of racial privilege, in which the systemic barriers to socio-economic opportunity were disproportionately imposed on racially marginalized groups (Bromley, 2019). While racially marginalized groups still encounter greater inequitable barriers, in contrast to white individuals at a comparable socio-economic status, white lower/middle-class Americans are experiencing an increased strain in garnering socio-economic success. In the United States, lower- and middle-class jobs, such as those in the manufacturing/industrial sectors, have been gradually exported to less-developed nations (Chomsky, 2017; Faludi, 1999). Foreclosures have spread from the labour market to the housing sector, which dispossesses white working-class individuals of the capability to buy the very homes that they grew up in. While it is the socio-economic system, including detrimental social policies, that limits economic support that would alleviate socio-economic strain, what is most perceptible to many white lower/middle working-class individuals are racially marginalized individuals who are perceived as encroaching on white men's monopolized power and control (Faludi, 1991; Hochschild, 2016).

The prevalent belief in meritocratic principles situates a social strain for the individual who can no longer attain the barest economic self-sufficiency that they were socialized to believe they were entitled to. The white lower- and middle-class grew up watching their parents and grandparents attain economic self-sufficiency through the very industrial and manufacturing positions that have either disappeared or no longer provide enough income to sustain a household at levels equivalent to those of previous generations (Faludi, 1999; Hochschild, 2016). As a result of the sustained belief in meritocracy, the unmet promise of socio-economic success ingrained in society can be turned inwards on the individual's sense of self-worth, perpetuating a social strain on the individual's identity. Such a strain would require the individual to either divest themselves from a long-held belief in capitalist promises of success (i.e., meritocracy, American Dream) and thus undermine the tenets of society, or to internalize their inability to attain socio-economic success as an individual failing (Borum, 2017; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2007). To maintain the idealized self, or really an identity situated within those structures of dispossession, many externalize blame upon a readily accessible image of individuals who are perceived as gaining privilege where once white men held a monopoly. This promotes a sense of aggrieved entitlement in which those who have historically held exclusive rights to socio-economic success now experience novel barriers while racially marginalized groups are perceived as 'stealing' or cutting in line through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives (MacMillan, 2025). The growing far-right is angry. They feel that something has been lost, whether it be jobs, a stolen promise of socio-economic security, or the 'unfairness' of social and governmental support that puts racially marginalized individuals in jobs meant for them. The far-right is mad at the government for supporting those who the aggrieved feel are too 'lazy' to help themselves; they are mad at the left for demanding that they change their language and accept a loss of privilege, and they are mad at those racially marginalized individuals, specifically immigrants, who are portrayed as stealing their jobs.

When the Trump(et) Sounds

The anger of the far-right can be exploited and directed towards those who are most vulnerable. A redirection of the growing anger and resentment of the American populace preserves the socio-economic and political system that is the primary source of that anger and resentment (Robinson, 2019; Robinson & Barrera, 2012). Leaders such as Donald Trump exploit and fuel the pre-existing rage and anger of the lower/middle class, directing it towards specific targets. Donald Trump offers the far-right populace simple answers to complex problems while actively participating in the systematic undermining of social and economic support systems (Benke, 2023). While a pivotal actor and symbol of the growing far right, Donald Trump is also a symbol of the domestic turmoil that plagues nation-states. Often, far-right movements coalesce around the image of a single individual/leader who becomes the embodiment of the movement. However, the populace was angry before Trump took up their voices and will remain angry long after he has been replaced by the next iteration (Robinson, 2019). This is not to belittle the power that Trump wields in directing the anger and frustration of the populace, nor to deny his current actions, such as mass deportations and the creation of what can only be called concentration camps for immigrants (Crowley, 2025; Pitzer, 2025). Donald Trump epitomizes the anger and resentment within the far-right, although wielding more power than any other far-right leader has in decades. Further, the actions of Trump, such as his overt denigration of the status or legitimacy of racially marginalized groups, have the potential to normalize hate-based language, especially as it emanates from a position of power and status (Soral, 2018). It is the far-right populace that requires further attention, for it is they who are angry and are further galvanized by leaders such as Donald Trump.

Crisis? What Crisis?

To be divested of pride, whether in one's gender, race, or socio-economic prospects, does not inherently necessitate the use of violence as a technology of restoration. However, in recent years, violence has become associated with the far right (Bjorgo, 2013; Jipson & Becker, 2025). Violence by the far-right is not simply a disciplinary technology, a form of social control that bolsters the group's objectives (see Black, 2004). Rather, far-right violence is a theatre that produces a spectacle of fear through injury and exhibition to the greatest number of people, both proximal (e.g., bystanders) and those who will experience it vicariously through media exposure (Akins & Winfree, 2017). This does not negate the intentional directionality of violence that is often engaged in against the targets of discrimination. Targets are purposefully chosen as the subject of violence in order to achieve a political or religious objective. However, when violence is inflicted upon indiscriminate targets, the far-right seeks to garner the greatest amount of mass casualties in an attempt to create a social panic (Simi & Bubloz, 2017).

While far-right violence, such as the Quebec City mosque shooting, the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting, and the attack on counter-protestors at the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, are reactionary events to the perception of a loss of status and pride in one's identity (e.g., race, gender), they are enacted as a result of a

delegitimization. The perceived existence of an existential crisis of legitimacy, such as those attacks against the supposed supremacy and entitlement of whiteness and masculinity (for example, see Miller-Idriss, 2025), warrants the reclamation of dominance through the spectacle of violence (Bjorgo, 2013). When the legitimacy of a group's supremacy is challenged, the far-right are likely to employ violence as a technology of reclamation, a demonstration of their superior position within society, as they alone have the capability of instilling fear into the hearts and minds of the populace. The devaluation of life through violence is thought to reify the inferiority and, consequently, the inhumanity of the subjects of such violence, for the righteous may only attack those who lack humanity. However, the inhumanity of the subject, those victimized by far-right violence, is always a reflection of the agitators themselves (Taussig, 2003). Violence is an inherent loss of humanity, not for the subject, but rather for those who believe themselves vested with superiority. While violence is often conceptualized as the means of reaffirming and demonstrating the supremacy of the agitator, violence always emerges from a position of disempowerment (Hage, 2000). Within our liberal democracy, we divest ourselves of the capability to enact personal violence and invest the state with a monopolized claim to all forms of violence. When those on the far-right employ violence to demonstrate the investiture of their supremacy as the hegemonic embodiment of the state, they are really acknowledging that the state no longer represents them (Hage, 2000). As such, violence is always a signal of one's loss of power.

About the Author



[Connor MacMillan](#) is a faculty member in the School of Social Sciences at Capilano University, a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Sociology at York University, a Researcher at the Collaborative for Racial Justice at York University, and a SSHRC Doctoral Fellow.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CRIMINOLOGY

Twenty Years Teaching Criminology: Innovation, Resistance, and the Courage to Rethink Learning

Dr. Sheri Fabian

When Dr. Sarah Yercich invited me to write an inaugural *Teaching and Learning in Criminology* piece reflecting on my 20-plus years teaching criminology at Simon Fraser University (SFU) for *The Western Criminologist*, I felt both honoured and slightly intimidated, uncertain about what insights I might offer. At the same time, it felt as though things had come full circle. I met Sarah in 2012 when she came to SFU's School of Criminology as a PhD student. Shortly after I accepted her invitation, I took on a new role at SFU, *Director of Educational Leadership and Teaching Inquiry*. The position has reshaped my teaching opportunities and turned me toward deeper personal reflection. Accepting the role compelled me to think about what brought me here, what kept me here, and how I hope to make a positive difference as I move on from the classroom.

I did not get here alone. My teachers, students, colleagues, and mentors have shaped how I see the world, expanded my thinking, introduced me to new ideas, and coached me to challenge the status quo. My journey began as a first-generation university student. It took time for me to understand both the privileges and the responsibilities embedded in teaching and learning. Over the years, I have come to embrace these obligations as opportunities to make a meaningful difference for students and colleagues. In this piece, I share some of the insights that have emerged along the way.

How did I get here?

Teaching is part of my soul, and an essential part of who I am. In Grade 1, I proudly announced that I would become a teacher. At the time, I imagined teaching Grade 1. Using my six-year-old logic, it seemed easy: if being in Grade 1 was simple, surely teaching it would be too. But life, as it often does, had other plans.

My career trajectory did not follow a straight, predictable road. Instead, it has flowed much like the river syllabus (right) I created for my undergraduate qualitative methods class:¹ a journey down a river filled with exhilarating rapids, quiet pools of reflection, unexpected bends, and the occasional muddy stretch where the path ahead was unclear. Occasionally, the current pushed me forward faster than I expected, and sometimes I had to pause, steady myself, and rethink my teaching philosophy, approaches to course design, and relationships with students and colleagues. Through it all, I learned that navigating a career in teaching demands both courage and curiosity, accompanied by a willingness to paddle hard when the waters are rough, and the patience to sit still when the river slows, letting those moments teach me something I often didn't know I needed to learn.

My non-traditional path to academia began when I completed a BA in Sociology and English. I expected to pursue a professional program and become a high-school teacher. Instead, an extension to a summer job supervising probationers redirected me. After three years of watching the same clients cycle through the system, I wanted a deeper understanding of the criminal justice system. That decision brought me to complete an MA in criminology and, ultimately, back to teaching.

My MA in criminology led to three years as an HIV educator, at a time when the diagnosis was fatal. People often asked what HIV education had to do with criminology, yet the links were clear to me. Supporting people helped show me the intersections between poverty, mental



¹ Graphic inspired by Miranda Meents and created by Greg Holoboff in consultation with Brian Lorraine and Sheri Fabian.

health, substance use, trauma, discrimination, and systemic inequities that shape people's lives. But as clients began to die, burnout set in. I moved into a research role with the BC government, analyzing crime data, supporting the provincial hate crime team, and taking part in a review of emergency response teams.

After government cuts eliminated my position, I began my doctoral studies. I also started contract work validating residential school claims for the federal government.² Nothing prepared me for the emotional impact of the archival research required for that work. That research helped me better understand the Canadian government's colonial project that continues to harm Indigenous peoples today. That work informed my perspective and continues to influence who I am, as well as my relationships and interactions with others. Below, I explore how these shifts in ways of seeing the world have impacted my teaching. It changed me in ways I could never have anticipated, and its direct ties to criminology continue to make me a better educator.

Creating Spaces for Discomfort and Growth

Criminology is not static. It is a discipline that evolves in direct response to societal developments, shifting political climates, changing demographics, expanded public debates, and public controversies, among others. My teaching methods and curricular priorities shifted alongside technological, social, and political changes that continue to challenge me to face uncomfortable truths about my white privilege and the complex nature of the world. Even the evolution of today's classrooms, as discussed below, reflects broader transformations in social awareness and lived realities.

I realized early in my career that I needed to engage students in critical conversations about how white settler privilege and ongoing and historical colonialism affect the over-representation of racialized people in all aspects of the criminal justice system. I witnessed these realities throughout my professional trajectory. My work across community corrections, HIV education, residential schools, and research on crime data all taught me that the criminal justice system cannot be understood without confronting its colonial roots. In each role, I could not unsee what I had seen. Although I didn't always have the language or insight in the moment, I had seen firsthand how colonial policies shape the lives of those who come into contact with the justice system. I understood how systemic inequities, created and reinforced through colonial policies, set up structures that shape people's pathways into criminalization.

Of course, systemic injustice is not new, but increasing public awareness invites criminologists to rethink what we teach and how we teach it. The confirmation of [unmarked graves at former residential schools in Canada](#) prompted a national reckoning around colonial violence and its ongoing impacts. Criminology programs are now much more likely to include material on Indigenous justice, intergenerational trauma, and state accountability. Similarly, the murder of George Floyd in 2020, captured on video and widely circulated, intensified global conversations about policing, systemic racism, and structural inequality. These events have made the critical perspectives previously seen by some educators as peripheral or elective, central components of criminology education for many.

Somewhat intuitively, I realized that if my classrooms were places to confront difficult topics and engage in potentially challenging conversations about justice, harm, power, identity, and systemic inequities, I needed to intentionally create inclusive spaces that were as safe as possible. I knew building relationships and community were essential to that process. I found ways to invite students into respectful, albeit often challenging, conversations that helped them rethink their own assumptions and understanding.

About five years into my career, professional development activities helped me find "my people." These events taught me about pedagogy that explained "the why" behind what I was doing. My heightened perspective helped me redesign courses with greater intention, and I began to engage with the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). I made many mistakes along the way. I learned to be comfortable sitting in the discomfort. I learned to do better next time.

As I moved forward in my own learning and unlearning, I have adopted decolonial and anti-racist pedagogies. My classes include conversations about Indigenous justice, state violence and police accountability, structural violence and systemic inequality, intersectionality, colonial harm, and intergenerational trauma. I help students connect historical context to contemporary realities. When we discuss issues like overrepresentation, systemic discrimination,

² The [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) houses a comprehensive summary of Canada's history of, and response to, residential schools.

or the “school to prison pipeline,” I situate these realities within the broader colonial legacy that scholars and government inquiries continue to identify as central to understanding Canada’s justice system.

I have never expected students to agree with me, or with each other. Instead, I want them to think, question assumptions, and understand the ways that multiple perspectives illuminate complexity. My classrooms, whether introduction to criminal justice or qualitative research methods, show that critical thinking is not an abstract ideal. Rather, it is a lived practice.

Ultimately, colonialism informs my teaching because it informs the system itself. My goal is for students to recognize, and critically engage with, the historical forces that shape contemporary justice institutions.

Postsecondary Teaching isn’t What It Used to Be: From Chalkboards to Chatbots

Just as criminology has evolved alongside changing social systems and a deeper understanding of the systemic forces that drive social injustice, postsecondary education today differs markedly from that of the early 2000s, both in terms of content and pedagogy. Technological innovations fundamentally shifted how universities delivered content, managed courses, and communicated with students. The early years of internet-enabled instruction, delivered in learning management systems (LMS), expanded to include Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) popularized by Ivy League schools, designed to reach global audiences. Some, maybe even many, faculty feared that large-scale online MOOCs would make universities obsolete and replace them with freely accessible digital content. I recall ‘doomsday’ arguments that online platforms would erode academic quality, reduce higher education to standardized, depersonalized instruction, and accelerate the commodification of knowledge.

Despite resistance to new technologies at the time, I now appreciate the ways ongoing technological transformations and digital innovations continue to force us to examine our long-standing assumptions about teaching and learning. I no longer look into a “sea of faces” in a lecture hall; instead, I look into a “sea of laptops.” It used to be that most students took handwritten notes and class discussions relied primarily on printed readings, physical textbooks, and verbal exchanges. Today’s students access articles, course content, and online discussions in real time. These shifts offer both expanded pedagogical possibilities and new challenges related to distraction and information overload.

While inequities amongst students have long existed, most would agree that the shift to emergency remote teaching during the pandemic brought these disparities to the forefront. Instructors sought new ways to adapt and rethink our course design and pedagogy. We were expected to be kind and accommodating, as we had awkward virtual meetings with students in their bedrooms, or in their cars, or without cameras to hide their backgrounds. Some students didn’t have safe or quiet places to meet. Some were confined to the family home, alongside siblings and parents, and with limited technological resources. As students experienced mental health strains at unprecedented levels, so did faculty and staff. Pandemic challenges created exhaustion that led to burnout as boundaries between work and home blurred. We set aside our own mental health challenges as the pandemic intensified expectations to be continually productive, under the emotional weight of supporting struggling students.

Shortly after the pandemic lockdowns were behind us, a new challenge has emerged. Generative AI (GenAI) marks a turning point that transforms every dimension of teaching and learning. I cannot predict how education will continue to respond to GenAI, nor can I know what post-secondary institutions will look like in future. I do know that although I identify as a criminologist, I am not interested in policing GenAI. I’ve made various attempts, some more successful than others, to revise assessments to encourage digital literacy and ethical use of technologies. GenAI highlights the need for critical thinking skills. After all, critical thinking allows us to question and challenge power imbalances and injustice, and it can help us resist attacks on democracy, human rights, and the institutions that safeguard principles that work towards creating a just and equitable society. We need strong critical-thinking skills now more than ever, as we navigate an increasingly complex and unpredictable world.

Teaching Together: Community, Care, and the Courage to Keep Rethinking

Early in my career, I treated teaching as a solitary pursuit. Over time, I learned we are at our best when we treat teaching as a team sport. I know that I bring knowledge and expertise to the classroom, and I also name and value the many ways I learn from my students, colleagues, family and friends. That recognition continues to transform my practice. As I consolidate my learnings, I encourage everyone to find their “people,” build relationships, and create community. Don’t restrict yourself to your discipline. My non-Crim colleagues often ask the best questions and share innovative practices that transfer from their discipline to ours.

Teaching is so much more than delivering a lecture. Teaching is an act of guidance, curiosity, and connection. Never forget that your role extends far beyond content. You shape learning by the ways you listen, respond, and make space for your students to grow. Focus on the students who care. The few who challenge us, drain us, or present with entitlement can easily consume our energy. They are rare. Try not to let them overshadow the students who show up curious, open, and ready to learn.

Don't forget that you are a role model and a mentor. Students often carry forward small comments we don't even remember making. I hear, time and again, from students who recall something I said that shifted their thinking, changed their attitude, or opened a new possibility. I don't always remember saying it, but they do, and that is all that matters. I also remind myself that they will remember when I am unkind, rushed, or thoughtless.

I often think about the events and movements of the past two decades that have reshaped not only the content of criminology and criminal justice education, but also the ways we deliver it. We are expected to remain adaptive, culturally aware, and responsive to students' evolving understandings of justice. As society continues to change, criminology classrooms will likewise evolve, and reflect new challenges, new technologies, and new insights into the nature of harm, accountability, and social responsibility.

To the skeptics who say that postsecondary institutions won't survive the current world, I say that we have the power to resist. We can build institutions that support both the people who learn here and the people who make that learning possible. At the same time, I remind you post-secondary education has historically adapted, survived, and even thrived through periods of profound change. I believe that if enough of us rise to the new challenges present and future, we can guide post-secondary education toward a future defined not by crisis but by creativity and care. Together, we can build a healthier, more resilient academic community.

Teaching is a privilege. It is complex, messy, challenging, and deeply human. But if you stay committed to the values of care, curiosity, fairness, and the belief that learning can transform lives, you will make an impact far beyond what you can see.

One of my greatest joys is helping students see their own potential, paying forward the very gift my mentors gave to me. Thank you, Sarah, for inviting me to share this reflection. And thank you to the many colleagues, students, mentors, family members, and friends who have joined me in this journey.

I end with the words of Maya Angelou: "At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel."

Positionality Statement

My name is Sheri Fabian and I identify as a white, heterosexual, settler woman with European ancestry. I was born in Syilx Okanagan territory (Kelowna), in the interior of British Columbia (BC) and lived there with my parents and brother and sister until I left for university. Growing up, I was one of very few my age whose parents were born in BC, and I was even more unusual as my maternal grandmother was born in Canada. I now live in Kwikwetlem (Coquitlam), BC with my husband and three cats. We have one daughter who lives in Edmonton, Alberta on Treaty 6 territory, with her husband and our two granddaughters. I share my identity to position myself in the work that I do. I am privileged to live and work on the unceded traditional, ancestral, and occupied lands of the Coast Salish peoples including the x^wməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and K^wikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Nations. I acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and present, and I dedicate myself to moving forward as an accomplice with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

About the Author



Dr. [Sheri Fabian](#), a University Lecturer in the School of Criminology, joined Simon Fraser University (SFU) as a lecturer in 2005. In 2017, she was appointed half-time Director of Transforming Inquiry into Teaching and Learning (TILT), SFU's unit dedicated to advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning and promoting evidence-based instructional practices. In January 2026, Dr. Fabian became the inaugural Director of Educational Leadership and Teaching Inquiry. This role builds on her work with TILT and broadens her mandate to include developing educational leaders, supporting instructors in pursuing their professional development goals, and mobilizing the strengths of SFU's teaching community to foster effective, high-quality teaching across the university. Fabian is a 2019 3M National Teaching Fellow, a 2016 recipient of SFU's Excellence in Teaching Award, and a 2014 winner of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Cormack Award for Excellence in Teaching.

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Julie Sriken, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Regis University, where she teaches forensic psychology, community psychology, women and gender studies, and research methods and statistics. She received a Ph.D. in Community Research and Action from Vanderbilt University, and an M.A. in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY. Her research focuses on social constructions of victimization and the acknowledgement of victimization experiences. As an educator, Dr. Sriken's works to increase the inclusion of marginalized communities in contributing to collective knowledge.



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