Ten Suggestions for Tenure and Promotion

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In a previous issue of *ACJS Today*, an article appeared titled, “So, You Want to Be a Criminal Justice Professor?” (Owen & Burke, 2005). The authors focused upon the job search process, providing tips on finding an academic position in criminal justice. This article can be viewed as the sequel, focusing on the next stage in one’s academic career. Once you have been hired, now what?

The purpose of this article is to highlight 10 recommendations that we have found helpful in preparing for the tenure and promotion process, with the disclaimer that we would not presume to have our comments supersede your own departmental or institutional guidelines. It is important to note that some institutions include promotion from assistant professor to associate professor with the granting of tenure. Other institutions may have separate criteria for promotion and for tenure. Understanding how

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You could say that Cathy and Mary talked me off the cliff this time. That interaction reminded me of the importance of communication in the criminal justice sciences. When you get down to the fundamental basics of what we do, we communicate information about criminal justice to one another.

In the past three months alone, the board has been doing a great deal of “communicating” about ACJS matters. Through Mary’s leadership, we discussed and agreed to a reciprocal agreement with the British Criminological Society. This agreement will provide incentives for members of each association to “cross the pond” and attend one another’s conferences.

We also approved a few new awards including the Academy New Scholar Award and the Victimology Section’s New Scholar Award. The Academy New Scholar Award was initially opposed by immediate past president Jim Frank (University of Cincinnati). During the discussion for this award, he asked, “Why don’t we just give everyone an award and be done with it?” Ironically, Jim came around and crafted the policy guiding this award. No one asked me, but I think his initial opposition was due to the fact that he is no longer a “new scholar.” Perhaps I am communicating too much.

The board also discussed various ways to more effectively communicate about criminal justice policies. Under the direction of Public Policy Committee Chair Peter Wood (Eastern Michigan University), we approved the use of policy alerts to be shared with our members and others. One form of these policy alerts will be the distribution of alerts from the Consortium of Social Science Associations. These alerts generally will focus on pending
legislation related to the funding of criminal justice research. Another variety of policy alerts will be in the form of “ACJS Policy Notes,” which will be distributed by Routledge and feature recent research published in one of our journals. These alerts will be sent to legislators, staffers, and policy makers. In addition, a Policy Notes resource webpage will be maintained by Routledge. Thanks to Cassia Spohn (Arizona State University) and Mary Stohr for working with Peter to develop this initiative.

Another effort to improve communication that is in the planning stages is the convening of the inaugural ACJS Doctoral Student Summit at our next conference in Orlando. In particular, ACJS will be inviting one doctoral student from every criminal justice Ph.D. program to participate in the summit. The summit will include a series of events, meetings, open seminars, and receptions that summit participants will be asked to attend. Each participating doctoral student will be allocated a hotel room at the conference hotel for three nights, at no cost to the student. Heather Pfeifer (University of Baltimore), Deanna Button (Richard Stockton University), and doctoral student Cherie Carter (University of Cincinnati) will be the working group coordinating the summit. I will be contacting graduate program directors from each program in the upcoming weeks to ask them to identify one student from their program who is willing to participate in the summit and receive the complimentary room.

This is no April Fool’s joke. And, oh, by the way, our Orlando conference will be held March 3-7, 2015.

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Upcoming ACJS Meetings

February 18-22, 2014  Philadelphia, PA
March 3-7, 2015  Orlando, Florida
March 29-April 2, 2016  Denver, Colorado
ACJS 2015 Annual Conference

“Broadening the Horizon of the Criminal Justice Sciences: Looking Outward Rather than Inward”

March 3-7, 2015
Caribe Royale All-Suite Hotel and Convention Center
Orlando, Florida

Program Chair:
David May, Mississippi State University, dmay@socmsstate.edu

Host Hotel:
Caribe Royale All-Suite and Convention Center
8101 World Center Drive
Orlando, Florida 32821
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your institution perceives the connection between promotion and tenure will assist you in making an effective application for both. The recommendations in this article are based upon the authors' many years of combined university experience serving in a variety of capacities, including associate dean, department chair, personnel committee chair, Faculty Senate president, Faculty Issues Committee chair, Faculty Appeals Committee chair, and Faculty Grievance Committee member.

What Is Tenure?

As defined by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) 1940 Statement on Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure, recognized as an authoritative voice on the subject, “Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: (1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and (2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability” (1940/2006, p. 3). As one of the most valued precepts of academe, tenure helps to ensure that faculty may pursue their areas of teaching and academic inquiry without interruption due to politics, institutional disagreements, value judgments, or other forces. In short, tenure protects a scholar’s academic freedom. This is of great significance in fields such as criminal justice, which take on some of society’s most controversial issues, both in the classroom and in research activities.

However, it is important to recognize that tenure should not be construed (despite some public misperceptions to the contrary) as a guarantee of permanent employment or a protection of work, whether in teaching or scholarship, that falls short of institutional expectations or requirements. As summarized by Van Alstyne (1971),

Tenure, accurately and unequivocally defined, lays no claim whatever to a guarantee of lifetime employment. Rather, tenure provides only that no person continuously retained as a full-time faculty member beyond a specified lengthy period of probationary service may thereafter be dismissed without adequate cause. (p. 328)

As such, tenure protects “academic due process” (p. 328).

With the important protections that tenure accords, many tenure-track faculty simultaneously—and understandably—look forward to a positive tenure decision but feel some sense of trepidation in preparing for it. Below, we offer 10 recommendations for making the tenure and promotion process as smooth as possible.

Recommendation 1: Read the Faculty Handbook

It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with the Faculty Handbook (or similar university policy documents—at some schools, this may include a collective bargaining agreement). Particular attention should be devoted to those sections of the handbook addressing evaluative criteria, tenure, promotion, reappointment, annual evaluations, pre-tenure and post-tenure review, timelines,
and stopping the tenure clock. Do not assume that the information you are seeking is only covered under the specific headings; handbooks often cross-reference these sections with other relevant material. Knowing the processes outlined in the faculty handbook and other policy documents will help in identifying the various decision-making bodies and their roles in tenure and promotion. This provides a necessary foundation on which subsequent recommendations will build.

**Recommendation 2: Understand Departmental Criteria**

Colleges, schools, and departments often set their own tenure and promotion criteria, which are more specific than those found in university guidelines. Furthermore, these criteria may prove important for reappointment and/or annual evaluations, so pay careful attention to them! That being said, college, school, and departmental criteria are often not uniform. In other words, the standards for your department’s promotion and tenure process may significantly differ from standards in another department, school, or college. Variation may be found in terms of the number of required or recommended publications, the types of publications that are valued (e.g., academic books vs. textbooks vs. academic journals vs. professional publications; peer-reviewed vs. non-peer-reviewed publications), the importance of securing grants (and distinctions between internal and external funding sources), expectations for teaching evaluations and the criteria that define effective teaching (e.g., the role of teaching portfolios, peer observations, student evaluations, creative pedagogy), and more.

Understanding the criteria becomes particularly important when decisions are made by Tenure and Promotion (T&P) Committees with members representing multiple academic disciplines. For instance, at some institutions, tenure and promotion is determined by college- or even university-wide committees (e.g., a committee could consist of sociology, psychology, political science, and history faculties evaluating you as a criminal justice faculty member). Members of such a committee may or may not be familiar with your discipline or its professional standards. Therefore, it is important for you to not only follow your departmental criteria but also to document how you meet those criteria (see Recommendation 5, below).

As you plan your annual reports (in whatever format is required), aim toward tenure and promotion. In other words, each time you are required to submit a report of your professional activities, use it as an opportunity to demonstrate how you meet the department/school/college and university criteria for tenure and promotion. Remember, this is all about marketing. You must market your product (that’s you!) so you can be selected for tenure and promotion. We strongly suggest that you talk to both your department chair and personnel committee chair to obtain a better understanding of the T&P criteria and process.

**Recommendation 3: Know the “Informal” Norms and Department Culture**

As you work to understand both the university and department policies, be aware of the “informal” expectations or understandings within the department culture. What is written on paper may vary from practice. Learn to understand the subtleties and nuances in expectations that are not conveyed in writing. For example, one department’s criteria might state, “A sustained record of publication is required.” But what does this mean? Informally, are a certain
number of publications expected? Are publications assessed for content and contribution to the field? Are certain publication venues perceived more significantly (in a multidisciplinary field such as criminal justice, this becomes an important question, as criminal justice scholarship may potentially appear across a wide range of venues)? Does your department favor or disfavor invited presentations, poster presentations, or presentations to community groups?

As another example, tenure and promotion criteria might specify “effective teaching” or a “strong commitment to teaching.” What does this mean, in practice? What score on teaching evaluations is deemed “good”? Are certain types of teaching practices (e.g., experiential learning, those emphasizing teamwork or communication) more highly valued than others? And, how much and what kinds of service are untenured faculty expected to perform? These are just a few of the questions that should be explored.

Informal norms may also exist in terms of documentation, which may vary in word and deed. Is there a “standard” annual report or tenure/promotion application or reappointment request? If so, know what it is and the timeline for submission. In some cases, there may be no standard application dossier. If that is the case, ask others who have successfully completed the process for guidance. Some universities have extremely rigid requirements, down to the exact number of pages for each component. Do not deviate from those requirements.

**Recommendation 4: Utilize a Mentor**

A mentor can help you understand the formal requirements and the informal culture of your department. He or she can also provide feedback on your yearly plan (we recommend that you have one, even if not required), answer questions, and so on.

Some institutions may assign a mentor to new faculty. Although it is good to know that this level of concern is present, you may be better served by a mentor of your own choosing. In this case, we would not recommend discontinuing the services of the appointed mentor, but we generally suggest that candidates for tenure and promotion seek mentoring and advice from multiple colleagues, including those who have successfully completed the process. This will allow you to triangulate responses to determine the best course of action.

T&P Committees may consist of all tenured faculty members in your department with a rank equivalent to or greater than your current rank, or, as indicated above, the Committee may consist of members outside your department (and, in some cases, even outside your institution). Select your mentors carefully so that you receive the most appropriate advice, keeping in mind that each institution and program has its own set of guidelines, processes, and expectations that will influence T&P decisions.

**Recommendation 5: Document Everything**

Once you have reviewed the T&P documents, learned the expectations, and had the initial conversations with your mentor(s), document everything that you do. In fact, the documentation process should begin prior to your first day at the institution. To reiterate, know your department and institutional criteria, and work with a mentor to identify the
format that your material should take. Then work to tie everything you do to the relevant criteria in your department. Ask yourself, “How does this demonstrate that I am meeting the requirements for tenure?”

As you document your achievements, we recommend that you keep a Word (or similar program) file with headings such as teaching, professional development, service, advising, and grants. You may wish to include subheadings, as appropriate. Then, every time you complete an item in that category, document it. You should, at the very minimum, include the date, time, venue, and purpose in your documentation. This will allow you to keep a running list that lets you place your accomplishments where they are best counted. It will also make the compilation of your material much easier, and it will let you track your professional progress.

During this documentation process, know what materials will be required for your T&P application and make sure you include them. For instance, does your department require that you submit copies of all of your publications? Or do they only require that you provide citations? Is it enough to say that you attended a pedagogical presentation, or will you need a certificate for verification? Proper documentation is essential.

It is important to note that it’s very easy to forget what you have accomplished. Err on the side of over-inclusion—you can always go back and edit it later; you probably will. You will appreciate the value of this type of record keeping as you put your T&P dossier together.

We suggest that each year’s documentation build upon the previous year’s. So, when it comes time to submit your documents for tenure and promotion, you have a nearly complete file to work with; it will not become a last-minute scramble to put together a dossier.

**Recommendation 6: Reflect on Evaluations**

You will likely receive letters of reappointment, annual evaluations, and/or pre-tenure reviews. These evaluations, usually based upon the annual reports or other materials you submit, generally indicate your progress toward tenure and promotion. If you are unclear on how your progress is being assessed or if you have any questions or concerns, ask!

It is important to note that what’s in writing is what matters (remember documentation). Being verbally told “you’re great” or being promised that your tenure and promotion is “automatic” carries no weight; a letter does. This is important because personnel committees, T&P committees, or administrators (chairs, deans, provosts, etc.) can change while you are on the tenure track.

Take careful note of your evaluation materials! Address all areas of weakness, and demonstrate how you have done so. This is important so that in the next evaluation or review cycle, you can indicate that “this concern” was raised and you addressed it “this way.”

It is also important to recognize “red flags.” If a criticism reappears, that’s a loud and clear message that the issue has not been successfully addressed or resolved. Do not assume that a good evaluation counterweights a concern noted in reappointment, or vice versa.
Consider how to best respond to all comments (without being defensive).

Your annual evaluations are considered “data points” in the tenure and promotion decision-making process; use them as a teaching tool to work toward success. At some institutions, they may also be considered in pay raise decisions (i.e., merit increase).

Keep in mind, the T&P process ought not to be adversarial. Your colleagues should be here to support and advise you; otherwise, they wouldn’t have hired you. Of course, if you do believe that the process is adversarial, you may need to ask yourself whether this department or institution is a good “fit” with your professional goals (See Recommendation 10).

**Recommendation 7: Be Collegial**

Although collegiality is difficult to define, Giamatti’s (1988) definition comes pretty close:

Collegiately is defined as the shared sense of a shared set of values; values about open access to information, about open exchange of ideas, about academic freedom, about openness of communication and caring; collegiality is the shared belief, regardless of field or discipline, in a generalized, coherent, communal set of attitudes, that are collaborative and intellectual. It does not imply unanimity of opinions; it implies commonality of assumption...at its best, it is a genuinely vital sense of community. (p. 39)

In some departments, collegiality may be specifically stated in the tenure and promotion criteria; in others, it may not. Is it noted in your Faculty Handbook? Other documents? Whether it is in the written criteria or part of the informal norms of your department culture, it would be naïve to imagine that collegiality does not come into play in some form or fashion. What makes this tricky is that collegiality does not directly correspond to the three standard areas of evaluation (i.e., teaching, research, and service). Your colleagues need to know that you are being a productive departmental contributor and excellent campus citizen. You must walk this line without “showboating” (e.g., “I am the greatest researcher who has ever lived”) or being labeled as a “slacker” (e.g., “I have so many better things to do than work on this department committee”).

Although we noted earlier the importance of academic freedom, that may be tempered by turf wars, unsettled expectations, or differing expectations within a department or college. This is when you should seek the assistance of your mentor(s) in navigating such issues.

Get to know everyone; it makes sense. It can also lead to many useful collaborations and friendships. At the same time, avoid departmental drama (yes, it does exist). If you are a new (or untenured) faculty member, be careful about taking sides. Once you do so, you are pretty well committed to that “camp.” A choice with poor results may affect your career, or at the very least, make your stay in the department or institution quite uncomfortable.
Bottom line: We recommend that you \textit{avoid politics} until you have earned tenure!

**Recommendation 8: Hit the Ground Running**

We suggest that you map out your pre-tenure goals from the beginning—work backward from your tenure decision date, knowing what you need to accomplish, and then map it forward on a reasonable timeframe. Make a point to regularly revisit your plan and make the necessary adjustments. For example, if you know that you will need at least three peer-reviewed articles for tenure and promotion, know how long the peer review process will take. This often varies by journal and may also vary based on the complexity of your work. Will you need to obtain external letters of support? If so, start cultivating those relationships now. Think about how you will be perceived by the decision makers—hopefully, as a productive and collegial colleague.

Overall, while perhaps easier said than done, an overarching strategy is to make it impossible to \textit{not} be given tenure. This can be accomplished by early planning focused on meeting all tenure and promotion criteria, both formal and informal. For everything that you do, ask the question, “How will this help me earn tenure and promotion?”

**Recommendation 9: Plan Carefully**

Seek balance while paying attention to all areas of evaluation and finding synergies that will allow multiple areas to work together (e.g., teaching leads to pedagogical research; teaching leads to service on curriculum committee; research can be incorporated into course content). Avoid the temptation to “only” spend the first year on teaching or postpone service until the fifth year.

Also, look for harmony in life beyond academe (we have heard that such a thing exists). As easy as it may be to spend hours at the office or to work every weekend and holiday, maintain a life outside work. Your career is about students, teaching, scholarship, and service, but remember that you have a career for your own sake. And, to be successful in that career, you need to have interests beyond the workplace that can refresh and renew you; resist the temptation to be captured by academe.

**Recommendation 10: Know Your Rights**

If you have been treated unfairly, familiarize yourself with the appropriate procedures for addressing the situation. Know what “triggers” an appeal or grievance (e.g., a decision maker not following the tenure and promotion processes, arbitrary and capricious decisions, decisions based on criteria other than those stated in the Faculty Handbook or other sources). Decisions sometimes do get overturned on appeal!

Know who you can turn to for help, particularly procedural advice. This may include the Faculty Senate, AAUP, collective bargaining representatives, or others.

Keep in mind that even if you prove successful during an appeal (i.e., if a denial of reappointment, tenure, or promotion is overturned), an unpleasant reality is that you may (unfairly) develop a reputation within the department or institution as a “troublemaker,” “complainer,” or “malcontent.” That being said, do not be bullied, either!
Related to the above is knowing when it’s time to move on and understanding when a department or institution is not the best fit for you. It’s possible that your time could be better spent seeking tenure at another institution that would better appreciate your contributions. We recommend that if you decide to seek employment elsewhere, continue to be a productive contributor to teaching and research at your current institution. The skills and knowledge you gain from one institution will prove beneficial as you move forward. For example, continue with your research agenda or experiment with creative pedagogical strategies that you can utilize at your next institution. Turn each position you hold into a positive and valuable learning experience.

Conclusion

Although this article focused on the tenure and promotion process from the rank of assistant professor to the rank of associate professor, with few exceptions, it can also apply to the promotion process from associate to full professor. Additionally, the tenure and promotion process should not be confused with the retirement process. Once earned, you should not rest on your laurels—doing so would contravene the very notion of tenure. It is imperative that you continue your academic achievements well beyond earning tenure and promotion, as you become an established leader in the field of criminal justice.

It is our hope that this article has provided valuable information toward a prosperous and productive academic career. We wish you much success!

References


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The Evolution of Serial Murder as a Social Phenomenon in American Society: An Update

Dr. Eric W. Hickey*

Over the past several years, we have watched crime rates plummet to near all-time lows. Violent crimes, such as homicide, tend to have histories of crescive growth and eventual decline. For criminologists, determining what influences fluctuations in homicide rates has yielded considerable insights into factors such as SES, gender, race, age, and motives associated with killing. Robert Ressler, an FBI agent who would eventually become known as one of the founding fathers of modern criminal profiling and behavioral analysis, was so drawn to a small but distinguishable group of violent men that he collected data on them for 30 years. Intensely curious and a bohemian at heart, Ressler stored his files in a basement bathroom of the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. With the arrival of a new FBI director, Ressler eventually moved his collection upstairs, and within a short time ViCAP and the first Behavioral Science Unit were created. The American serial killer was formally recognized and, assisted by new technologies, educational advances, and extraordinary media hype, the concept of forensics was revolutionized. Forensics, as we understand it today, has become the intersection of many disciplines during various points of forensic investigation and analysis.

More than 30 years since the Ressler files were being gathered, we have witnessed the concept of serial murder evolve into a social phenomenon that has captured the attention of social scientists, law enforcement, forensic psychologists, and victimologists. In concert with this scrutiny came the media and profound public interest. In the past 30-plus years, Hollywood has produced thousands of movies about real and fictional offenders. Many of these depictions have contributed to myth building and stereotypes of offenders. Thus, being a researcher in this area has required getting past misinformation and sensationalism, finding others who share similar research interests, and dredging up reliable data. For the many professionals in the field today, the application of scientific method, vastly improved crime scene analysis, peer collaboration, and advanced understanding of offender and victim behavior have moved the narrative past the original hurdles. However, stereotypes die slowly and sometimes never. Levin and Fox pointed out these myths early on as the phenomenon grew. Over time and with research, we learned that not all serial killers are white,
male, and intelligent, nor do they generally roam around the United States, nor are they all sexual predators. In fact, we have learned much about debunking myths and the need to bring more consensus and uniformity to defining serial murder. To that end, the FBI’s Behavioral Analysis Unit at the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime hosted a symposium in San Antonio, Texas, in 2006 and invited 150 experts in the fields of psychiatry, forensic psychology, law, criminal investigation, and behavioral analysis. The symposium created a definition of serial murder that could be used by all people who investigate and research multiple homicides, specifically serial murder: the unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offenders in separate events. The group also identified the following categories as the primary motivations of serial killers: anger, criminal enterprise, financial gain, ideology, power thrill, sexual, and psychosis. By bringing experts together, the symposium became a tremendous catalyst in developing research opportunities, collaboration, and good will.

Developing Research

Today, more professional practitioners and scholars work together than ever before in examining multiple homicide offenders and their victims: The Wyoming Serial Killer Project, headed by Dr. Scott Culhane at the University of Wyoming, involves interviews with hundreds of serial killers from around the United States. Scott and his team have created the largest data set of serial killer participants held outside a federal law enforcement agency. The PCL-R-Serial Killer Project, conducted by Dr. Christopher Patrick and his team at Florida State University, in collaboration with a team at the California School of Forensic Studies at Alliant International University, are applying Dr. Robert Hare’s Psychopathy Checklist-Revised to a few dozen serial killers to measure their levels of psychopathy. Dr. Michael Aamodt, professor emeritus at Radford University, and his team have created the Radford University Serial Killer Information Center. Several researchers who have been active over the years in collecting serial murder data were asked to donate their data to establish a central data bank for all cases of serial murder. This immense effort has brought much clarity to areas of serial murder research and provided many opportunities for student and professional research and publication.

From an investigative perspective, many law enforcement agencies have created Cold Case Review Teams (CCRTs) to examine unsolved cases of serial murder. Often, professional practitioners with crime scene investigative experience or expertise in various forms of profiling have been recruited to assist in the investigations. Other private investigative organizations have emerged, composed of retired police and FBI experts who engage in solving homicides. Also, between 2009 and 2011, the FBI developed the Highway Serial Killing Initiative to identify victims of traveling serial killers in the United States. Over the past 30 years, more than 500 bodies of victims have been found alongside or near freeways and highways. The FBI amassed a database of more than 275 suspects in the highway murders, and almost all of them are long-haul truck drivers. Many murders have been solved by linking highway abductions, especially when the victims were prostitutes.
Serial murder, of course, is not an artifact of the United States, but we do have a tragic history of them, as do our neighbors to the north and south. In the past several years, American law enforcement and researchers have been forging ties with counterparts in various countries, including the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa. The exchange of information and training is critical in identifying and tracking international offenders, including those who cross borders to commit multiple homicides. The Internet has become a critical tool in the hands of investigators, just as it is a weapon for some offenders. Lee Mellor has created The Concord Group, a Canadian Listserv of 25 to 30 forensic experts interested in collaborating on criminal cases, research, and other forensic interests. In the United States, Enzo Yaksic organized the Serial Homicide Expertise and Information Sharing Collaborative Listserv, which now connects more than 150 forensic experts. Kenneth Mains has recently organized The American Investigative Society of Cold Cases (AISOCC) in an effort to solve homicide cases in various countries. Jeff Shiplee in England has launched The Society of Forensic Interviewers (SoFI), composed of vetted forensic professionals interested in sharing ideas and expertise. These are only a few of the recent endeavors in the ever-expanding field of applied forensic sciences.

It is fair to say that we have all learned a great deal about serial homicides over the past 30 years. It is also abundantly clear that we now have to reevaluate what we know or what we think we know. Indeed, we have seen a distinct decline in reported cases of serial murder in the United States. How do we account for that? Certainly, improved technologies and improved policing and investigative practices have played significant roles. But how much of an actual decline has there been when we consider serial murder as the killing of two or more victims? Are offenders who kill two victims the same as those who kill 20? What is the profile of a two-victim killer compared to the profile of a 20-victim killer? The public perception of serial killers are those with larger numbers of victims. We tend to focus on the Bundys, Gacys, and Kempers, not the media unworthy who have two or three victims. The media usually does not focus on small cases, make movies about them, or follow them in the courts. Who are these offenders? Indeed, there are many offenders who kill once, get caught, go to prison for a few years, and upon release kill again and get caught. They may use the same methods, have the same motivations, and/or select similar types of victims, which qualifies them, according to the FBI definition, for inclusion as a serial killer.

Black and Other Minority Serial Killers

Unlike their white counterparts, black serial killers, along with other minorities, have been practically nonexistent, even in the movies. In the early 1990s, a black serial killer was portrayed in the film The Candyman, in which the killer was driven by racially motivated revenge. Readers will be hard pressed to find movies about black serial killers, in comparison to the more than 1000 involving white serial killers. Black females represent an extremely small number of serial killers: Only two were identified between 2004 and 2013. However, researchers increasingly have found blacks to be an important focus in serial-homicide research. Vernon Geberth, a former NYPD homicide investigator and nationally
recognized crime scene investigator, has also documented the surge of black serial killers in the past several years. For example, between 2011 and 2013 there were approximately 126 new serial murderers identified in the United States, of which 46% were black and only 43% were white. This is consistent with trends we have seen over the past 10 years. This problem is clear: American society fails to recognize poor blacks who kill poor blacks. The real tragedy is not that we are downplaying black serial killers; it is the fact that we (society) are ignoring their victims. This lack of recognition is rooted in minority status, socioeconomic status, and racism.

Phillip Jenkins notes that black multiple homicides are usually discussed in the context of political motivations or terrorist activities, such as in the Zebra murders of the early 1970s. Our media simply does not focus upon minority murders (unless minorities are killing whites) because such offenders and their victims do not sell newspapers nor earn high viewer ratings nearly as much as cases of whites killing whites. Of course, there are exceptional cases, including Wayne Williams (Atlanta child murders) and John Muhammad and John Malvo (D.C. snipers), which attracted national attention. In both cases, investigators and the public initially believed the perpetrators to be white. Considering that there have been nearly 350 cases of black serial murder in the United States since the mid-1800s, little has been done to bring those cases to the public’s attention. Serial killers, regardless of race, must never be sensationalized or ignored.

The rise in the number of black serial killers is directly related to the FBI definition of serial murder that requires only two or more killings in which a pattern of murder has been established. This redefining of serial murder brings into question the notion that most people who murder only murder once. There appear to be many cases of black and white homicide offenders who are convicted of one murder but may have committed others or, upon release from prison, kill again. Our challenge is to go beyond stereotypes and focus upon the truth, however that may play out. Kenna Quinet raises a very important question regarding measuring the scope of serial murder. There are approximately 30 to 40 thousand documented or reported missing persons in the United States. Another group she refers to as “the missing missing,” or missing persons who were never reported as missing, some of whom could easily be victims of serial murder. This possibility suggests, for example, that many more persons, such as prostitutes, could be victims of serial killers without that information ever being known. For example, The Long Island, NY murders of prostitutes were accidentally discovered, as were the West Mesa Albuquerque, NM murders of 11 prostitutes, suggesting that other victims of serial killers, some reported missing as well as “the missing missing,” still need to be located.

**Future Research**

The San Antonio Symposium was a huge step in creating a framework in which investigators, researchers, and other professional practitioners can collaborate. We will continue to debate an effective, operational definition of serial murder. This is the dialectic of research
and investigation. It has been and will be a complicated task, given the variety of offenders who meet the current definitional framework. Besides confronting persistent stereotyping in cases of serial murder, much research needs to be done involving the bio-basis of serial murder, including DNA analysis. Types of profiling, such as geographic, criminal, psychological, victim, crime scene, equivocal death analysis, and paraphilia, all need further analysis and integration as investigative tools. Personality assessments of offenders will better prepare investigators in conducting interviews. Although we are learning that many serial killers are not true psychopaths, we also know that interviewing them effectively requires specialized training. Victimization studies in serial homicides involving victim-offender relationships, victim precipitation or facilitation, victim selection, and survivor trauma are requisite in the evolution of serial murder research. What are the paraphilic histories of sexually motivated serial killers, their fantasies and signatures?

Serial murder investigations are often very dynamic, complicated, and demanding of resources. Law enforcement is to be applauded for their many sacrifices in resolving cases of multiple homicide. Identifying and bringing home missing and murdered victims provides some closure for both investigators and families of the deceased. Through collaborative efforts, we can uncover much more data on serial murder, including victim-offender relationships; serial murder in the health care industry; team killers; international killers; female killers; gay, lesbian, and transgendered killers; and a host of other related types of offenders. Serial murder is the Dark Side. Let us keep up the momentum by bringing even more light and clarity. Col. Ressler would heartily agree.

*Eric Hickey, Ph.D., is Dean of the California School of Forensic Studies at Alliant International University and the author of Serial Murderers and Their Victims (Wadsworth-Cengage, 2013).
Real Gangstas: A Conversation with Timothy Lauger

I recently caught up with Timothy Lauger to chat with him about his recent book, Real Gangstas: Legitimacy, Reputation, and Violence in the Intergang Environment. To write this book, Lauger interviewed and observed a mix of 55 gang members, former gang members, and non-gang street offenders. He spent much of his fieldwork time in the company of a particular gang that he refers to as the “Down for Whatever Boyz.” In this unique ethnographic study, Lauger sought to understand and explain the reasons for gang membership, including a chaotic family life, poverty, and the need for violent self-assertion in order to foster the creation of a personal identity.

RW: You conducted an ethnographic study in which you spent 18 months interviewing and observing young African American men, most of whom were gang affiliated. As a white Ph.D. student, how were you able to gain entrée to this group and establish rapport with your subjects?

TL: I occasionally asked the individuals in the study about my status as a white male, and they never really seemed to care about it. One of the central figures of the study said (to paraphrase) that white people were “cool” as long as they cared and were trying to help. They seemed to place me in that category.

RW: That’s always helpful. And, how did you meet these guys in the first place?

TL: Well, I volunteered at a nonprofit organization for youth in Indianapolis for over a year before research began and got to know a number of the guys in the study. I spent a lot of time driving them to potential employers, helping them fill out job applications, and writing resumes for them (a practice that continued after the research ended). I also took them to a few college campuses and set up some meetings with people in financial aid. They seemed to trust that I had their best interests in mind, which I did.

RW: I was surprised that many of your subjects allowed you to record the interviews. Why do you suppose they were often willing to let you do this?

TL: This is honestly something I have never thought about. I just asked, and they seemed fine with it. It helped that they were not heavily involved in dealing drugs, though I did record some interviews with active drug dealers. They were probably comfortable with it because I typically allowed them to control the direction of the conversations. Developing trust is also important. I once asked a gang member during our first conversation to tell me more information about his brother’s murder conviction, and he completely shut down and refused to talk. He did not trust me.
enough to continue, even though the criminal case was closed. He never talked to me again. By contrast, another person told me that his cousin had killed someone but had not been arrested for the act. He even gave me his cousin’s name, which I never tried to remember. The next time we spoke, I told him that I deleted that information during the transcription process and immediately destroyed the tape. He had not realized that he told me about his cousin and was surprised when I brought it up. These small decisions build trust and lead to the opportunity to record conversations.

**RW:** During the course of your research, did you ever encounter any ethical dilemmas?

**TL:** Ethical dilemmas were not common, but they did occur. As I describe below, I once unknowingly drove gang members to a conflict. That could have led to a significant ethical problem if they had used violence to resolve the conflict. Fortunately, that did not happen. A few months after I left the research field, I realized that I had recorded gang members directing a vague threat of violence toward another gang. I originally never thought to report it because I interpreted the comment as “tough talk” rather than an overt threat or plan of action. To my knowledge, the gang did not follow through on the vague threat. The line between a real threat that involves the reasonable anticipation of future violence and an exaggerated statement about the prospects of future violence is often blurred when researching gangs. On another note, I was always bothered by the temporary nature of my relationship with study participants. My participation in their lives seemed self-serving, as I moved to another state and could not make a long-term investment in the area. This does not violate any formal research ethics, but it conflicted with my personal ethics.

**RW:** It seems like most of your respondents freely admitted to using violence. Some subjects even bragged about gun violence. Do you think they were embellishing their stories?

**TL:** I argue in my most recent article that “stories are social performances that categorize rather than duplicate experience” (Lauger, 2014, p. 185). Stories about violence are told in social settings for a purpose, and individuals will align the narrative to ensure that they look good according to the cultural expectations of the audience. On the streets, and especially within gangs, building up a reputation for violence enhances one’s status, and individuals will embellish the parts of the story that make them look good. They likely exaggerate the severity of violence and the conditions under which it occurred. For example, in my study they talked about stomping a person’s head into the concrete but then acknowledged that the victim got up and walked away. They talked about confronting another gang by shooting 100 guns or being “jumped” by 50 individuals. These numbers were embellished to emphasize the strength of their gang or the cowardice of another group and the unavoidability of victimization. In most stories, the storyteller comes out looking good to the audience.

**RW:** So how did you know whether or not a subject was telling you the truth about an alleged act of violence?

**TL:** Discerning embellished accounts from real events is difficult and requires careful analysis on the part of the ethnographer. It did help that I knew some of the gang members really well. Triangulation also helps, but it is difficult to determine whether consistency provides evidence of factual events or individuals are altering the story in similar, culturally acceptable ways. I do use some stories as if they
duplicate the actual events. For example, in my book *Real Gangstas: Legitimacy, Reputation, and Violence in the Intergang Environment* (Lauger, 2012), I rely on a recorded conversation about a conflict between two gangs that happened about 10 minutes before recording began. I did not witness the event but was close by. There was very little time in between the event and the recorded story for the gang members to rehearse or dramatically adjust the story. They also collectively told the story, which gave it some credence. Still, it would have been interesting to talk to the opposing group to hear their side of the story. It probably would have been told differently. In most cases, I viewed stories about violence to be social performances that provided more insight into cultural processes than actual violent events.

**RW:** Did any of the subjects ever try to “test” you or make you prove yourself to them?

**TL:** No, there was never any attempt to test me in any way or persuade me to engage in illegal behavior. There were times when I was involved in routine events that included or led to possible criminal behavior. Most cases occurred when I used my car to drive individuals around the city. For example, I once picked up some of the boys at an apartment complex and drove them to their brother’s apartment a few miles away, which was a common practice. Before we left, they placed a large chest in the trunk of my car. I assumed that they were moving clothes, as one of the boys was going to live with his brother. I realized a few miles later that something illegal could be in the chest (although they were not drug dealers). To this day, I have no idea what was in that chest. Another time, they directed me to a location that we frequented together. I assumed that we were going to hang out with other members of the gang and failed to ask them why we were going to that location. When we arrived, they told me to stay in the car, and, without letting me know what they were about to do, they confronted another gang. I was very lucky that no violence occurred during that incident.

**RW:** Did you have any mentors who helped support you in this research endeavor?

**TL:** I had a professor in college named Robert Butler who introduced me to the ethnographic method and the realities of street life. He exposed me to a world that was far different from the extreme rural region of Northern Wisconsin where I grew up. It fascinated me and sparked my sociological imagination. My interest in gangs and street life further developed in college when I read Sudhir Venkatesh’s (2000) *American Project*, which introduced me to academic research on the topic. My interest in street gangs continued to grow as I read more about the topic. Regarding ethnography, I am fascinated by people’s stories and enjoy the challenge of telling them in a way that contributes to the development of theory. Steve Chermak mentored me throughout graduate school, even when he took a job at Michigan State and I stayed at Indiana University. He helped me immensely during those years and gave me the freedom to pursue this project for my dissertation. I did not, however, work with or have access to any urban ethnographers during this project. I simply had to learn through experience and by reading other studies.

**RW:** Eighteen months is a long time to spend immersed in the field. Did your role as a researcher have an impact on your personal or professional life?

**TL:** I absolutely experienced a tension between my role as a researcher and my role as husband and father. This tension had nothing to do with the
topic of my research but with the time commitment that comes with ethnographic methods. In retrospect, the research did not influence my personal life so much as my personal life influenced the degree to which I immersed myself in my research. I preferred to more fully immerse myself in the lives of Indianapolis gang members for a longer period of time but could not due to my life circumstances. My wife and I had our first child when I was doing field research. She was working as a teacher and became pregnant with our second child toward the end of the research. I needed to be home. When I was spending 30 hours a week in the research field and many more hours transcribing interviews/organizing notes, I was still able to be at home enough to help out, but those were challenging times. I experienced a similar tension the next few years when I was writing a dissertation and then a book while teaching eight classes a year. I had no social life outside of family time, which is where the sacrifice occurred. I frequently ponder how I can do good ethnographic research while continuing to prioritize my wife and children. This will be a significant task as I begin my next project. My life has only gotten busier. I currently have three children (6, 5, and 18 months), and my role as Dad is now firmly entrenched. I teach at least six classes a year and have responsibilities away from family and work.

RW: I’ve always wondered how violent juvenile gangs really are. During the course of your research, did any of your subjects get seriously injured as a result of gang violence?

TL: A few of the gang members I was particularly close to died or were severely injured after I ended my research. One was shot at a party and died a few weeks later. Two of his younger brothers were shot in the street about a year after that incident. One of them survived, but he was shot again the following year and suffered severe, life altering injuries. Their cousin was also shot in the leg after my research ended. Assessing the level and frequency of violence in street gangs is dependent on both context and perspective. Ethnographic research, like my study, that primarily focuses on one gang may lead to distorted accounts of violence by either exaggerating or minimizing the frequency and severity of violence. Fortunately, more representative research helps in this regard by consistently finding that violent perpetration and victimization is more common among gang members than non-gang members. It also reveals that gangs vary; some are more violent than others. One could easily read incidents of victimization or the violent stories these teenagers tell and assume that violence is a daily occurrence, but that would not be accurate. I was only around a few potentially violent situations, and most days were filled with mundane events. Violence is a real threat that gang members are concerned with, and they certainly talk about violence during routine social situations. Within the group I observed, actual violence occurred sporadically and severe incidents happened infrequently. Still, infrequent violence has devastating consequences.

RW: How did you know when you had collected enough data for this study?

TL: My exit from the research field was influenced by professional and family obligations. I needed to take a job so that I could support a growing family and write my dissertation. Doctoral research has more time constraints than other projects. It needs to end at some point. The project ended at an appropriate time. Data had become redundant and adequately verified a number of important ideas.

RW: Do you still keep in touch with any of your research subjects?
TL: I have not kept in touch with most of the 55 people in the study, but I occasionally communicate with a few of the individuals. Unfortunately, two of my closest contacts died soon after I left Indianapolis. “Shawn” was murdered and “Sidney” unexpectedly died during an accident. “Layboy” spent some time in prison for robbery and recently got out after a three year “bid” for burglary. He has also been shot twice. I occasionally speak to “Aaron,” who is busy with two daughters. He works in a warehouse and is involved in the Indianapolis music scene.

RW: If you were to conduct this type of study again, is there anything that you would do differently?

TL: I learned a lot from my first study and will begin the next project as an experienced researcher rather than a novice. My mistakes were good learning experiences. First, I was initially too passive and relied on one person to connect me with research participants. This person failed to honor his promises, and the study almost failed. Next time I will be more assertive and pursue multiple pathways for research rather than relying on one person. Second, I have learned that one cannot have too much data. I wish I had been more diligent and used the tape recorder more often, even when events seemed irrelevant to the direction of my study. Third, I am not sure that I would spend so much time driving gang members around in my car. It was necessary in this study because members of the gang were living in different areas of the city, but it increased the likelihood of being in a dangerous situation or a complicit accomplice. Fourth, my “theoretical toolkit” has expanded, as I have sought to better understand my experiences in Indianapolis. Studying has led to innumerable insights and questions that I wish I had before the project began. But that is the nature of research and learning. I look forward to pursuing or utilizing some of these ideas in the future.

RW: What are some of your future projects?

TL: I am currently working on a few papers and starting to explore options for my next ethnographic study. I have a few different ideas for the next study, but I need to spend more time exploring the local community (Buffalo and Niagara Falls) to determine the exact direction of the project. I will eventually decide on a broad topic and then rely on an inductive approach so that the emerging data drives the development of ideas.

References


*Timothy R. Lauger is an assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice at Niagara University. He received his Ph.D. in criminal justice from Indiana University. He is the author of Real Gangstas: Legitimacy, Reputation, and Violence in the Intergang Environment (Rutgers University Press, 2012). He has also recently published articles in Criminal Justice Review and the Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal.*
Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators: Looking Toward the Future

Lock Haven University hosted the 2014 annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators (PACJE). Dr. Katherine Ely, assistant professor of criminal justice at Lock Haven, coordinated the conference; more than 75 Pennsylvania criminal justice faculty, students, practitioners, and family of students were in attendance. Thirty-one students, faculty, and practitioners made presentations in 12 panels and roundtables. The annual PACJE $500 Graduate Student Scholarship Award was given to Paul Lucas of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The annual $250 Undergraduate Student Scholarship and the $25 Outstanding Student Paper Award were given to Mandi Linz of Mercyhurst University. Entries submitted for the PACJE Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award were deemed not suitable to receive the award.

PACJE 2015 will be hosted by Slippery Rock University. Dr. Rebecca Schnupp, assistant professor of criminal justice at Slippery Rock University, will be the coordinator of PACJE 2015 (month and date to be announced).

PACJE has been in existence since the early 1980s and traditionally met on a Friday evening and Saturday at a Best Western or Days Inn. Conference presentations were made in one room on Saturday. Seeking a better way to convene the annual PACJE conference, in 2004 the executive board decided to copy the method used by the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS).

Originally, NEACJS met on the campus of Roger Williams University (RWU) in Bristol, RI. In 2009, the executive board decided to use the conference facilities of the Baypoint Inn as a matter of convenience, and it has been at that location ever since. The Baypoint Inn is part of the RWU campus and is used as student housing during the academic year. In the summer, it operates as a hotel. It is the same set up as ACJS, but writ small. All presentation rooms are in the Inn, and all are equipped with PowerPoint, which RWU allows us to use at no charge.

Instead of staying on one campus, PACJE decided that the first vice-president would coordinate the conference on his or her campus. This has worked very well. To date, PACJE has been held on the campuses of Penn State Harrisburg (twice), Messiah College, Slippery Rock University, Penn State Altoona (twice), Neumann University, Penn...
State Schuylkill, and Lock Haven University.

PACJE membership dues are $25 and conference fee $55. Yet, PACJE is able to award a total of $825 in scholarships and paper awards because of the cost-cutting assistance received for use of the conference facility. The only other major expense is food services, which consumes the lion’s share of conference income. Usually, the host will help with the breakfast, but it still consumes much of the income.

Recently, the Criminal Justice Program at PSU Harrisburg has sponsored the Undergraduate Student Scholarship, and Edinboro University sponsored the coffee bar. Contributions such as these also assist in keeping fees low for students and faculty.

PACJE learned the hard way not to rely on volunteer institutions to host the PACJE website. On two separate occasions, the sites were taken down unannounced and all was lost. The cost of the website is offset by the confidence PACJE can have in its permanence and ability to revise quickly.

I hope you have found the above article to be useful and informative. Also, if your state does not currently have an organization similar to PACJE, perhaps you can use some of the strategies highlighted above to start one!

*James (Jim) Ruiz is an associate professor of criminal justice at Penn State Harrisburg. He is the author of The Black Hood of the Ku Klux Klan, Past President of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators, Past President of the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences, and Treasurer of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Justice Educators. His research interests include police administration and supervision, ethics in policing, police interaction with persons with mental illness, use of force, and canine deployment, among other topics.
In the past 40 years, the prison industry has grown approximately seven-fold, with 2.4 million incarcerated people in the United States at present (Cullen & Jonson, 2012). The trend during this time has been to institute more of a retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation style of corrections. Although these styles may reduce violent crime because they lock up predatory people, worthwhile results are still not satisfactorily delivered (Ludwig, 2010). Inmates need to be encouraged, empowered, and elevated through education programs that provide something to be proud of, bolster a healthy ego, and engender hope. Strategically, it will help by reducing recidivism and making prison time productive. In years past, there seemed to be more concern for the inmate and reintegration into society. Measures may have been improperly utilized and evidence-based, empirical data may have not been employed effectively to argue for the continuing support of the rehabilitative process. As a result, the era of rehabilitation was over and retributive and incapacitation initiatives were instituted. Since then, the benefits that society derives from the imprisonment of offenders are inadequate considering the amount of money spent on incarceration. The return on investment for society is very low (Ludwig, 2010). And the prisoners’ reintegration into society and communities remains a disconcerting problem. Education and schooling for inmates is a viable alternative to simply sitting idly in prison.

Education and consequent employability are factors that determine how well the correctional system has performed its job after an offender reintegrates into society (Apel, 2011). Recidivism is the measure by which prisons’ productivity or effectiveness is assessed (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). So far, the prison system is condemned by many because it is not perceived to be a place for personal improvement and reflection, but rather a place for mere punishment. There have been unexceptional attempts at “educational” programs, like Scared Straight, that act to reduce further deviance and recidivism through the use of tactically administered fear. In the seventies, according to Klenowski, Bell, and Dodson (2010), Scared Straight programs were instituted to educate juveniles about the harshness of prison life. This program was found to be ineffective, being punitive and geared toward deterrence, which has shown little promise in preventing future criminality (Klenowski et al., 2010). From a rehabilitative standpoint, the Scared Straight program may be more beneficial to the participating inmates. They talk about their experiences and reflect on their life. The inmates may use this experience to highlight events that led to their incarceration and psychologically reconcile their own issues. This might have a therapeutic effect and inculcate a
desistance for crime in the future. A better form of education is warranted if society is seeking improvement.

Formal classroom education in nonconfrontational settings can teach the inmate not only technical skills but survival skills, which can offer long-term benefits. The institution of nonconfrontational (classroom) educational programs for inmates is crucial because the output of the prison will be much more beneficial to society (Machin, Marie, & Vujic, 2011). It will instill healthy self-confidence, which will help the offender hold himself to a higher standard. And with increased knowledge, the inmate’s employability will increase (Apel, 2011). If the inmate is engaged thoroughly in an educational setting, he may understand what lies ahead and may align focus with expectations of society (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). Education will help offenders desist from future crime, reduce recidivism, and lower the prison population; therefore, it is a cost-effective penal solution and instills a sense of purpose and value in many lives that once seemed hopeless (Kim & Clark, 2013; Machin et al., 2011; Ludwig, 2010).

Educating inmates before their release is a sharp turn from what the correctional system is now, but it would be of significant benefit to society on many fronts. To begin with, it is important to consider that it is not an easy task to teach inmates. There are special considerations that cannot be overlooked as the setting of this school changes the dynamics of teacher and student interaction. Also, there are some subjects that would be off limits, like racism and sexism; other subjects may hit close to home, considering the inmates’ present situation and because they are controversial (Parrotta & Thompson, 2011). According to Parrotta and Thompson (2011), it is difficult to develop trusting relationships with inmates because of their encounters with the prison system as well as prior bad experiences with formal education. Many of these offenders did not have productive educational careers, and some, if not most, of them dropped out of school at some point. However, the good effect that school can have on prisoners cannot be discounted; it brings a sense of normalcy to the lives of inmates who are living a very abnormal existence inside a prison. It gives the inmates a chance to interact with people from the outside and show that they are rather normal and not simply criminals.

According to Machin et al. (2011), there is a significant relationship between education and crime. It is shown that there is a marked reduction in property crime at least when the level of education or even forced education is increased in people. Although Machin et al. concede that some education acquired can be used for illegitimate purposes, for the most part it is beneficial because it offers the violators something to lose. It is a social factor that cannot be denied as it increases the opportunity for legitimate work and the cost of bad behavior (Machin et al., 2011; Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). Another factor cited by Machin et al. (2011) is that education incapacitates through schooling. In essence, while the person is studying or attending to schoolwork, he is less apt to engage in deviant behavior. It is also pointed out that education can have a positive effect on patience and increased stamina to stay on task, therefore contributing to the avoidance of risk taking. This is a case of long-term benefits that become clearer to people once they advance their education. As Machin et al. suggest, stress, boredom, and the lack of money precipitate dropping out of school for many young people with myopic outlooks who are more focused on immediate gratification than actively considering the strategic benefits of a genuine education.
Prison education programs are meant to enhance the possibility for more opportunities, a better life, and hopefully desistance from crime by its participants (Rose, Reschenberg, & Richards, 2010; Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). According to Rose et al. (2010), about half of all prisoners have reading skills at or below a fifth-grade reading level. In short, the majority of these people are functionally illiterate and in dire need of help if they are to attain any semblance of success in the outside world (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). It is a huge challenge for the correctional system. It is not enough for the system to give convicts mere job search assistance (Apel, 2011). The other side of the equation has to ensure that the former offender has a skill set to offer (Apel, 2011) because without this, the employability of the inmate upon release would come into question. Pryor and Thompkins (2013) remind us that this is crucial because the acquisition of legitimate work upon release is essential to the success outside of prison and will keep the prior offender from seeking money through illegal means and thus from recidivating. Also, according to Rose et al. (2010), the cost of implementation of a college-level program at a prison institution would be deemed minimal once the potential benefits to the convicts, prisons, students, and the community are taken into consideration. As Rose et al. (2010) surmise, the Department of Corrections mission statement and those of universities promote working with the community, and since many prisons and universities are in close proximity to each other, it would offer everyone involved a unique educational experience—a win-win situation. It would be an inexpensive and innovative way to educate prisoners and reduce reincarceration for the benefit of society as a whole.

When considering the benefits of the correctional system, the costs have to be studied as well (Ludwig, 2010). Education is in society’s best interest if it reduces the cost of crime. Violence and crime in general tend to diminish when the level of education increases in society. The most obvious alternative—mass incarceration—has proven very costly and it has been detrimental to educational programs and initiatives and may very well have a spiral effect difficult to gauge, monitor, and improve (Ludwig, 2010). The state can spend its money more constructively, with the confidence that it is acting in society’s best interest and with greater accountability. The funding formerly consumed by mass incarceration translates to spending on education, preventive programs such as early childhood intervention, and better policing efforts (Ludwig, 2010). Educating inmates while in prison will have a particularly strong effect on society, as Parrotta and Thompson (2011) posit that this type of education is rehabilitative in nature and it reduces recidivism up to 50%.

Many of the problems with recidivism and reincarceration of offenders may be of society’s own doing. There are plentiful opportunities, and the state has the ability to take advantage of them to improve the lives of inmates and strategically improve the lives of its citizens as well. The idle time that inmates spend in cells, especially low-risk offenders, could be better utilized in educational programs to better equip these people for reintegration into society once they have fully paid their debt (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). Education in prisons should be implemented as a means of increasing the employability of offenders, articulating acceptable norms, preparing offenders to deal with the discrimination that they are most certainly to experience, preparing them with skills to offer the job market, and thus reducing criminality and recidivism.
Education can be paid for and provided to inmates with the use of government and private interest grants available to proper petitioners. The classrooms can be set up inside the prison, similar to an actual school setting, so the inmates can feel a different atmosphere than the depressing prison environment they occupy (Parrotta & Thompson, 2011). The curriculum could include such subjects as psychology, sociology, math, English, history, political science, and other basic topics, just as in a public school (Rose et al., 2010). It could also include fundamental skills needed in the “outside” such as home economics, business, and basic computer skills. Other programs could include vocational training such as welding, general construction, automotive and diesel mechanics, and even gardening. Having inmates learn these skills will benefit society even more than the students, plus it will give the state something to be proud of.

Society needs to look at education for inmates in a strategic sense. Many offenders have a narrow-minded outlook of education and have dropped out of school because they do not see its long-term impact (Werts, 2013). Society is guilty of being too focused on immediate results and thus impatient in receiving returns. The state must consider that this initiative will take time to produce benefits. Inmates who are educated and even go on to earn a degree have been shown to have high employment rates (Rose et al., 2010). Employment is one of the biggest factors that acts as a social bond to keep people from recidivating (Machin et al., 2010). It will keep the former offender’s mind occupied with healthy activity and therefore he will have less time to delve in deviance. Employment will inevitably offer stress and adversity to the person, but education equips the student with the ability to negotiate problems in a more prudent and civilized manner (Delaere, De Caluwe, & Clarebout, 2013). It enables the person to think more clearly and develop cogent ideas that are useful in parlaying difficult situations. The insecurity that the offender may have felt before education has a tendency to cause anger and lead to more frustration, but with a functional education, the ex-convict will be prepared to perform his work with confidence. Education enables the employee to articulate feelings and events and justify actions in a socially acceptable and even admirable manner (Werts, 2013).

The state is never selfless. It does not act for the benefit of a person or group if there is nothing to be gained by it. Sometimes the advantages of an action are so inconspicuous that they are easy to overlook. Such is the case with the education of inmates. The state needs to focus on the benefits and not only the cost side of the equation (Ludwig, 2010). Of course, there are benefits for the offender that come in the form of improved self-confidence and self-image, but it will serve the state well when he approaches the job market better equipped with education and confidence to become a productive member of society (Werts, 2013). Education for the inmate will instill pride, but it will replace the arrogance that was once felt from ignorance and was a façade to mask an insecure and violent personality that lashed out because it felt vulnerable. The former offender will hold himself to a higher standard because he is prepared to succeed and so will the state hold this person to a higher standard and expect productivity and law-abiding behavior (Delaere et al., 2013; Werts, 2013). But most important, the ex-convict will feel hope for maybe the first time in his life. He will have something more to live for and to look forward to. The state can feel better because it acted humanely, but it benefitted economically by producing a better individual—and this was done in prison! It is more difficult but more satisfying for both...
parties because they are no longer quitters.

For all the talk about rehabilitation and restorative justice, the correctional system is viewed by society as a place for retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence. The success of the correctional system should be measured in terms of the benefits it provides society, not merely in terms of retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation, but of education and success of the prior offender once assimilated into the free population (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). It is not enough for society to expect incapacitation and idle time as a return for its investment and hope for a repentant offender who learned a lesson. There must be quantifiable expectations and degrees of accountability from the system in view of the end product or results coming out of the prison system. Education, as proposed here, should be instituted in the correctional system for the welfare of the state. Education’s returns are not easily quantifiable and are not quickly identified and verified. It takes empirical studies that are unbiased and completely objective. Society has evolved in a manner that is more humane. The methods of punishment and correction have been evolving because society has been learning and does not suffer from a short memory. The collective intelligence offered by the history of corrections will dictate that education is at the very least a most viable option in terms of the productivity of prison. Unfortunately, society has to toil and suffer the pains of guttural, punitive, and ineffective methods of correction before it comes to its senses.

References


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The Michael C. Breswell/Anderson Publishing Outstanding Student Paper Award
ACJS Minority Mentorship Grant Award
Outstanding Mentor Awards
Donald MacNamara Award

SAGE Junior Faculty Professional Development Teaching Award – Nominations Deadline – October 15, 2014

Award descriptions, nominations criteria, and submission information are available in the “Awards” Section of the ACJS website at www.acjs.org.

Alex R. Piquero
ACJS Awards Committee Chair
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apiquero@utdallas.edu
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee is soliciting nominations for the following Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences offices: Second Vice President, Trustee-at-Large, and Region Four Trustee. All candidates for office must be regular ACJS members in good standing. The individuals who are elected will take office at the Friday 2014 ACJS Executive Board Meeting.

The person elected to the office of Second Vice President will have a four-year term of office on the ACJS Executive Board and will hold the offices of Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President in turn. The person elected to the office of Trustee-at-Large will have a three-year term. The person elected to a Regional Trustee position will have a three-year term. Only current ACJS Regular members holding professional employment affiliation in the Region (Four) and having been a member of the respective regional association for at least one full year immediately prior to being nominated or petitioning may run for the respective Trustee position. Region Four includes the states Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Individuals seeking ACJS office may achieve candidacy by either petition or nomination. Individuals who use the petition process automatically secure candidacy, as long as the petitions are deemed to meet the minimum number of signatures required. Individuals who are nominated for office shall compete for placement on the slate via review by the Nominations and Elections Committee, which will make a recommendation to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

Those nominating individuals for ACJS office are expected to contact the nominee to ensure that the nominee is willing to run for the office in question. An ACJS member seeking an office via petition must obtain seventy-five (75) signatures of Regular ACJS members in good standing. The petition must state the name and complete address of the candidate, e-mail address, home and office phone numbers, and the office the candidate is seeking. To facilitate verification, the petition must also include the clearly printed name, signature, and institutional affiliation or address of each ACJS member signing it and the signature date. More than one petition form may be submitted on behalf of a specific candidate.

Nomination Forms Must Be Postmarked By July 1, 2014. The Nomination Form can be accessed directly from the ACJS Home Page or at: http://www.acjs.org/pubs/uploads/callfornominationsFORM.doc

Petition Forms Must Be Received No Later Than June 15, 2014. The Petition Form can be accessed directly from the ACJS Home Page or at: http://www.acjs.org/pubs/uploads/Petition.doc.

Mail all nominations and petitions to:

James Frank, Chair
ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
7339 Hanover Parkway, Suite A
Greenbelt, MD 20770.

Address any questions to the Committee by contacting Dr. Frank at frankj@ucmail.uc.edu.

As per ACJS Policy 303.01, the following rank-ordered criteria will be used by the Nominations and Elections Committee in making recommendations to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

1. Dependability, demonstrated experience, record of accomplishments.
2. Demonstrable service to the Academy.
3. Demonstrable record of scholarship or contributions to the field of criminal justice.

ACJS Policy 104.01 states its goal of inclusivity. ACJS seeks to provide opportunities for all its members to participate in the business of the Academy, including policy and decision-making.

NOTE: The final slate of candidates approved by the ACJS Executive Board will be asked to complete a Candidate’s Information Form. This document will include length of ACJS membership, previous service for ACJS, previous service to other criminal justice organizations, major publications, and a candidate’s statement.
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The Journal of Crime & Justice, the official publication of the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association, is a peer-reviewed journal featuring original scholarly work in the area of crime and criminal justice. Published three times a year JC&J welcomes quantitative and qualitative articles, and theoretical commentaries. Special topic issues are also welcomed.

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GREETINGS!

I hope this issue of *ACJS Today* finds everyone doing well and ready for the summer break. If you are like me, you now have a pile of books and articles you have been wanting to read all year but have not had the opportunity to because of so many other commitments. The summer months are always my time for catching up, not only on my research reading list but also on some indulgent reading. So, I would like to add one more article to your summer reading pile. For those of you who are interested in criminal justice history or who would like to know more about the person for whom the Academy’s most coveted award is named—Bruce Smith, Sr.—a short biographical sketch is now available on the ACJS website (http://www.acjs.org/uploads/file/ACJS_Bruce_Smith_Sr.pdf).

Two years ago, I interviewed many of the past presidents to obtain their biographies for the *History of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences*, published on our 50th anniversary. A number of the past presidents suggested that in light of the fact I am the ACJS historian, I should give consideration to writing a biographical sketch about Bruce Smith, Sr. Many of the past presidents were, in fact, recipients of what is ostensibly ACJS’s highest award, the Bruce Smith, Sr. award. They all said that they were honored to have won the award, but they knew very little about Bruce Smith, Sr. or his contributions to criminal justice.

After the 50th anniversary meeting in Dallas, Texas, I began researching Bruce Smith’s life. I discovered that he was born and raised in New York City, attended Columbia University, and lived in the city for the rest of his life. He began conducting police reviews in the early 1920s for the Institute of Public Administration, which was loosely associated with Columbia University. He spent his entire career conducting these police evaluations, authoring books and journal articles on the police, and developing a reputation as one of the leading experts on American policing. He was truly instrumental in many of the policing reforms from 1925 to the early 1960s.

After exhausting my own resources, those in Sam Houston’s library, as well as those online, I realized a trip to Columbia University’s library was in order to look over their holdings. I ventured to New York last summer to conduct primary research, and although Columbia does not hold his personal papers (the whereabouts of those are unknown), they do have an extensive collection of his early police surveys, books, other writings, and his pre–World War I master’s thesis. Those holdings also gave me further leads to some resources that I have never seen used in any other biographical sketch of his life, most of which have appeared as entries in various police and criminal justice encyclopedias.

In the fall of 2013, I completed the manuscript, but it ran to nearly 20 pages, so how to disseminate the article became a challenge. In the
end, it was decided that posting the article on the ACJS website, alongside the ACJS history, would be the best means for dissemination. So, if you are interested in learning a little bit about Bruce Smith, Sr., a quick trip to the ACJS website will get you to a 17-page PDF document that is a biographical sketch of the man for whom our most coveted award is named. Print it out, download it, and add it to your summer reading pile. Enjoy!

*Willard M. Oliver, Ph.D., is a Professor of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University, as well as Past President and Regional Trustee of the Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice. Professor Oliver holds a doctorate in Political Science from West Virginia University and has published in journals, such as, Criminal Justice Review, Journal of Criminal Justice Education, Police Quarterly, and the American Journal of Criminal Justice, among others. He presently serves as the ACJS Historian.
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April 15th
August 15th
October 15th

The editor will use his discretion to accept, reject or
postpone manuscripts.

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Articles may vary in writing style (i.e. tone) and
length. Articles should be relevant to the field of
criminal justice, criminology, law, sociology or related
curriculum and interesting to our readership. Please
include your name, affiliation and email address,
which will be used as your biographical information.
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Minimum length: 700 words
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Citation Style: APA 5th Edition
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