

The Tow Youth Justice Institute is a university, state and private partnership established to lead the way in juvenile justice reform through collaborative planning, training, research and advocacy.

UPCOMING JJPOC MEETINGS:

JJPOC Meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

April 20, 2017

May 18, 2017

June 15, 2017

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The Tow Youth Justice Institute hosted an Open House to celebrate its second anniversary on November 10, 2016. From left, William H. Carbone, Executive Director; Emily Tow Jackson, President, Tow Foundation; President Steven Kaplan, University of New Haven; and Dean Mario Gaboury, Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences.

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Juvenile Justice Policy And Oversight Committee - A Systems Perspective

The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) was created in 2014 by Public Act 14-217, to oversee continued improvements in the state's juvenile justice system. The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute supports the JJPOC through staffing, research and coordination efforts. The work of the JJPOC is largely conducted through its four work groups: Diversion, Incarceration, Recidivism, and Cross



Agency Data Sharing. These groups work collaboratively to develop system-wide and research driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state. The workgroups are comprised of state, local, private, not-for-profit, and advocate agencies.

2017 Recommendations to the General Assembly:

The 2017 recommendations provide comprehensive strategies that are supported by research and best practices that directly impact and enhance the well-being of children and youth. These strategies involve changes at the legislative, policy, and program levels and are now under active consideration by the legislature.

The following are some of the major system change recommendations that emerged from the workgroups:

1. The creation of a centralized community-based diversion system plan that addresses the needs of at-risk and status offending children and youth within the context of their family, school, and community by providing early identification, screening, referrals, care coordination and subsequent appropriate intervention and services.
2. The elimination of all remaining Families with Service Needs (FWSN) offenses from court referral and diversion of such cases into the system described in recommendation number one above.
3. The housing of 15-17-year-old children who are transferred to the adult court to be placed within an age and developmentally appropriate facility not under the Department of Correction.
4. A comprehensive plan for the design and development of a Career Pathway system for youth involved in the juvenile justice system that provides access to educational and vocational programs.
5. Annual reports to be submitted to the JJPOC on recidivism and other measures by DCF and the Judicial Branch.
6. An independent review of the CJTS population profile and placement tools, and issuance of a Request for Information (RFI) for possible replacement of CJTS with small community based treatment programs

cover story continued...

that are physically secure through the private nonprofit sector.

7. A four and a half year phase-in process for the Governor's Raise the Age to 21 proposal in the event the legislation to do so is enacted into law.

Harvard Study on Raise the Age to 21

At the December 2016 JJPOC meeting, Vincent Schiraldi, Senior Research Fellow and Lael Chester, Research Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School of Criminal Justice Policy and Management presented findings from their research project PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGING ADULTS IN CONNECTICUT: Providing Effective and Developmentally Appropriate Responses for Youth Under Age 21. The researchers conducted literature reviews in the fields of neurobiology, developmental psychology and life course criminology; examined a growing body of research on best and emerging practices that target court-involved emerging adults in U.S. and abroad; facilitated a series of meetings to discuss the proposal and to seek feedback about both the opportunities and the challenges presented; and they analyzed a significant amount of data from Connecticut public agencies.

Based on their findings, the researchers support the policy of raising the age to 21 and make 15 specific recommendations to facilitate the implementation. Among the 15, are major expansion of diversion opportunities, detention alternatives and developmentally appropriate services including vocational and educational options; mental health and substance abuse, housing stability, and family involvement. A copy of the report can be found at www.newhaven.edu/tow.

Moving from Institutions to Community-based Treatment in Juvenile Justice

On March 16th, prior to the monthly JJPOC meeting, a special briefing with national experts took place focusing on "Moving from Institutions to Community-based Treatment in Juvenile Justice". The discussion centered around building comprehensive community-based services and supports for children and families involved in the juvenile justice system. National experts Marc Schindler, Executive Director, Juvenile Policy Institute; Shaena Fazal, National Policy Director, Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.; and John Dixon, Associate Commissioner Close to Home Initiative Division of Youth and Family Justice NYC Administration for Children's Services led an informational panel focused on:

The impact of closing youth prisons on children, families and public safety.

What a community-based continuum of care to address the needs of the children in the juvenile justice system must include to insure the best outcomes for the public and the children.

The guiding principles and strategies from the recently released "Beyond Bars: Keeping Young People Safe at Home and Out of Youth Prisons"; a report from the National Collaboration for Youth that many states are considering as they seek new ways to reduce recidivism and keep communities safer.

Restorative Justice Practices Project

The Restorative Justice Practices Project (RJPP) kicked off in the fall of 2016 with funding from the Child Health and Development Institute as part of the School-Based Diversion Initiative. Restorative Justice Practices are an excellent alternative to traditional discipline in schools, as well as a strong community-building communication approach. In using them, practitioners can expect to prevent unnecessary suspensions, expulsions and school-based arrests, develop new, more positive ways to address challenging behaviors in their buildings and, as a result, restore damaged relationships when harm does occur. RJPP is providing a series of restorative practices trainings in collaboration with the Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice (CRJ), as well as providing on-going technical assistance and coaching for trainees as they facilitate restorative practices in their school districts.



**Connecticut School-Based
Diversion Initiative**

In October, CRJ trainers Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Erica Bronstein provided 33 participants from public school districts in Waterbury, New Haven, Bridgeport, Windham, West Haven and three technical high schools (Platt in Milford, Eli Whitney in Hamden and A.I. Prince in Hartford) with an introductory professional development session on restorative practices. Followed with comprehensive two-day trainings on Tier 1 Restorative Practices in December and January, school district Leaders in Residence and their school-based staff, as well as our community partners from Waterbury Youth Service Bureau, FAVOR, Inc. and Project Youth Court, New Haven, were provided with hands-on skills and resources for effective implementation of Restorative Circling skills and resources. Restorative Circles are a structured communication method involving participants physically sitting in a circle, taking turns sharing their thoughts and feelings, through the use of a talking piece. Circles are an excellent opportunity to increase social emotional learning, strengthen empathy between participants and increase school climate. Next steps include a series of Tier 2 RP trainings scheduled for the spring of 2017, as well as in-district coaching and roll-out assistance by the RJPP Coordinator, Devon McCormick. To learn more about the Restorative Justice Practices Project, please contact Devon at dmccormick@newhaven.edu.



Educators in the West Haven Public Schools work on planning circles for their own school communities. From left, Scott Shand, West Haven High School Assistant Principal; Kate Scalesse, West Haven Public Schools SBDI Leader in Residence; Brooke Zaffino, Bailey Middle School, Social Worker; Amy Singer, and Bailey Middle School, Social Worker.

The Tow Youth Justice Institute Welcomes Donna Pfrommer, Director of Development and Communications

Donna Pfrommer joined the Tow Youth Justice Institute team in October 2016. Donna most recently worked for 10 years at United Way of Coastal Fairfield County, the last two years specifically for the Cradle to Career Collective Impact movement in Bridgeport. She became excited about youth justice during her time engaging with 1,800 Bridgeport students in a day of opportunity and brought that enthusiasm to TYJI.

Donna brings a unique blend of experience in marketing, fund development, branding, communications and public relations with 20 years experience in non-profits and 10 years in the consumer sector. She has raised tens of millions of dollars utilizing her fundraising expertise. Her strategic marketing and communication skills give her an in-depth understanding of increasing brand recognition and strategic use of online marketing. She is a graduate of Fairfield University and a resident of Milford.



Celebrating the First Cohort: Transforming Youth Justice: Building Reformers

Fifteen leaders from the Greater New Haven region successfully completed the 2016 nine-month leadership development program, with significant support from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. Each monthly session provided opportunities for leaders to develop collaborative leadership skills, focus on juvenile justice reform and best practices, and explore core competencies such as empirical research, data-driven decision-making, and restorative justice practices. The program balances professional and personal experiences and perspectives on youth justice with a call to action as reformers. Cohort leaders developed unique capstone projects that can impact youth justice reform efforts within their organizations and communities.

The participating leaders were passionate about addressing chronic and significant challenges to better meet the needs of youth, their families and their communities including police-youth interactions, truancy, bullying, and mental health. Nearly half of the cohort chose to collaborate on a capstone project to improve police-youth interactions from a youth-led program model with support from several systems including police, probation, and schools.

"From a mental health perspective; my concern is that by the time a youth comes to us they have experienced so much – arrest, hospital, or probation. When police first come to a home; that is a key time to intervene. We need to begin to work with the families right then."

The leaders presented their individual and group capstone project plans at the December graduation celebration before their agency leadership, colleagues, friends and family, and invited guests from the Community Foundation, the University of New Haven, and the Tow Youth Justice Institute team. The graduation event closed with fellowship awards and a call to action to take a "deep dive" into the work of youth justice by keynote speaker, Dr. Carla Oleska from Elms College in Chicopee, MA.



First Cohort funding was provided by



**The Community Foundation
for Greater New Haven**

2016 Leadership Graduates (L to R) Lt. Joe Murgo, East Haven Police Department; Asst. Chief Tony Reyes, New Haven Police Department; Carlos Santana, Union House/Corporation for Justice Management; Stephanie Gallagher, Boys and Girls Village; Lyne Landry, Guilford Youth and Family Services; Jackie Diggs, Department of Children and Families; Rev. Tom Sievel, St. Vincent de Paul Church; Carlos Collazo, Boys and Girls Club; Patricia Nunez, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch; Michaelangelo Palmieri, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division; Mandy Miranda, Wallingford Police Department; Dawn Poindexter, Abundant Harvest Outreach Ministries; Malcolm Blue, Department of Children and Families; Kate Gunning, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Juvenile Probation; and Mike Pavano, New Haven Public Schools.

2017 Transforming Youth Justice: A Leadership Development Program Cohort Begins in April

Thirty-four (34) individuals who are residents of 19 different cities and towns in Connecticut, and represent a wide range of agencies at the state and local level that are dedicated to youth justice have applied for the second Cohort Group. Agency affiliations include clergy, education, parents, mental health, police, community non profits, Youth Service Bureaus, and the Departments of Children and Families, the Department of Correction, and the Judicial Branch (Juvenile Probation, Court Support Services Division). This second cohort group will begin their 9-month intensive collaborative leadership experience with the Tow Youth Justice Institute in April.

Faculty Spotlight: David L. Myers, Ph.D.

Professor and Director of the Criminal Justice PhD Program

Dr. David Myers came to the University of New Haven in August 2016 with a long and distinguished career in criminal and juvenile justice, most recently at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he was a Professor with the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. He has taught more than 25 different courses at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels, specializing in classes on research methods and quantitative analysis, juvenile justice and delinquency, and criminal justice policy, planning, and evaluation. In addition to his teaching and research, Dr. Myers previously served as Dean's Associate in the IUP School of Graduate Studies and Research; Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies at IUP; Interim Executive Director of the IUP Research Institute; and Interim Director of the IUP Murtha Institute for Homeland Security.



How did you begin your work in the juvenile justice field?

In the 1990's I was a probation and parole officer in the juvenile justice and adult criminal systems, so I saw youth violence first hand. That led me to think about the causes of delinquent behavior and how we respond to it as a society. I subsequently decided to pursue a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, and I focused my research on juvenile justice and delinquency.

What drives your passion for seeing the juvenile justice system change?

While I was a probation officer, I saw many kids growing up with high levels of risk factors that were beyond their control. I felt that as a society we were not doing enough to intervene and assist them. I also believe that rather than waiting for delinquent behavior to develop, which leads youth into the system, we need to give them a better chance to succeed in life.

What brought you to the University of New Haven?

I had been aware of the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences for years and was impressed by the work and programs that also happened to be of interest to me. When the Ph.D. Program Director opportunity came up, I felt the job description was a perfect fit. It has been an exciting new challenge, and I've enjoyed the people here at the university, the area, and working with students and faculty to develop the doctoral program.

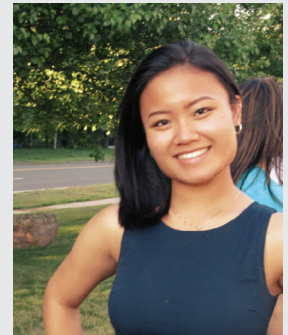
What were some of your publications on the topic of juvenile justice?

I've been active with publishing juvenile justice articles in such journals as Crime and Delinquency, Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, and Criminology and Public Policy, and I've published two books on the topic of juvenile transfer to adult court (Boys among Men: Trying and Sentencing Juveniles as Adults and Excluding Violent Youths from Juvenile Court: The Effectiveness of Legislative Waiver). I've also worked on a number of grant-funded projects to study and evaluate juvenile justice policies and practices in the field.

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Student Spotlight: Asia Hutchins

Asia Hutchins, graduating this year with a degree in Family and Juvenile Justice and Clinical/Community Psychology, has dedicated her time to support juvenile justice reform in a variety of ways. In addition to being a Juvenile Justice Intern with the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI), Asia is a Peer Wellness Educator- UNH DV/SA Prevention and Awareness, is the Executive Assistant- Alpha Tau Criminal Justice Honors Society, is a CSA Intern – New Haven City Hall (Community Services Administration Office), and serves on the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC). We recently asked Asia about her experiences with her courses and working with the TYJI.



What was your deciding factor to study in the field of juvenile justice?

When people usually talk about the criminal justice field, it is normally within the realms of policing, national security, or investigative services. However, I believe studying family and juvenile justice was the right choice for me because I've always been interested in working with young people. Learning about juvenile justice and all the reform currently taking place (both in CT and nationally) as a young adult myself gives me what I believe to be a unique and important perspective when it comes to JJ reform.

On top of being a criminal justice major, you're also receiving your degree in psychology. How do you feel that these two majors will coincide with one another?

Criminal justice and psychology overlap on so many levels. There are different "schools of thought" and theories in both criminology and psychology. Some schools focus on the macro level (i.e. environmental criminology, community psychology) and others on the micro level (i.e. rational choice theory, clinical psych) and whether it be criminology or psychology, there are different explanations and theories that parallel or mirror one another. When we study why people commit crimes (or don't commit crimes!), there are so many lenses we can analyze the situation with. Both the criminological perspective and the psychological perspective are unique and when used together can enrich analyses of criminal justice issues.

How do you feel working with the Tow Youth Justice Institute has helped you prepare for a role working in the field after your graduation?

Working with Tow has been an eye-opening experience. I've helped work on several different projects on various different levels ranging from event planning, research and programming. I think that this diverse work experience will certainly allow me to go into any kind of work force with some background experience.

You will be working with the City of New Haven on YouthStat as part of a University Cooperative Work Experience. What are you hoping to accomplish during your time with the department?

I am actually working at the Community Services Administrative Office which encompasses a plethora of different departments ranging from offender reentry under the Fresh Start Program, Youth Services, to Homelessness, etc. I hope to gain more knowledge on the administrative level but I also feel this Co-op allows me to work more one-on-one with individuals from the city of New Haven. The beginning of my student/professional career has thus far consisted of administrative kind of work (programming, research, communications, clerical) and I have loved every step of it! However, I would like this experience to expose me to the other side of the "desk" so to speak and allow me to help people through social services/ direct services.