

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 the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

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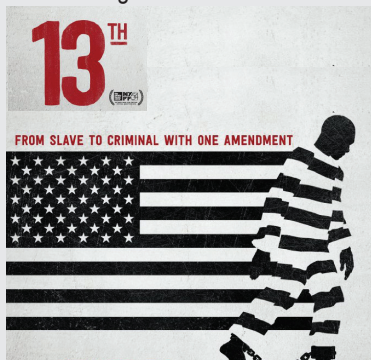
TYJI Advisory Council

Sharing Connecticut's Experience with Raise the Age

13th Documentary Facilitated Discussion with Students

On April 12th, nearly 85 students, faculty, staff and TYJI Leadership Alumni came together in small groups for a guided, facilitated discussion on the acclaimed documentary, 13th. Participants were asked to watch the documentary prior to attending the program in order to discuss how the language of the amendment created a loophole which resulted in the mass incarceration of African-Americans over the past 150 years. The documentary revealed staggering statistics contrasting the total population of the U.S. as 5% of the world's population but having 25% of the world's incarcerated individuals.

The documentary explores the impact of legislative directives such as the declaration of the war on drugs and zero tolerance policies which contributed to the criminalization of African-Americans, as well as pervasive racial and ethnic disparity in the criminal justice system.



Overwhelmingly, the student response to the program was positive and impactful and provided them with the opportunity to speak and share differing perspectives on the issue within the context of their academic and community experiences at the University. The Tow Youth Justice Institute was happy to support and co-sponsor with CJ Club, ACJA, Legal Society, Campus Climate Coalition, The Charger Bulletin, NAACP, BSU, and Kappa Kappa Psi.

Creating Youth Justice Reformers at the University of New Haven

Building on Decades of Juvenile Justice Education

The juvenile justice system, nationally and in Connecticut, has been undergoing significant reform, correcting some of the deficiencies that have contributed to problems for those involved with the system and their communities. Since the mid-2000s, juvenile justice policy reform efforts have incorporated research on topics such as behavioral and mental health issues, adolescent development, and the use of overly punitive sentencing. These research areas inform practitioners' and scholars' understanding of the root causes of youths' engagement in the juvenile justice system. Consistent with these reforms, the University of New Haven, which has been offering a concentration of courses focused on juvenile justice for over twenty years, began updating its juvenile justice curriculum to keep up with the reforms taking place and to create better prepared students to enter the workforce in the criminal and juvenile justice fields.



University of New Haven students.

Updating the Curriculum

Although criminal justice and criminology programs are rapidly growing throughout the United States, most colleges and universities do not offer concentrations, certificates, or degree programs in juvenile justice. In 2014, a Curriculum Committee of the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) was formed from staff, faculty and interns and began work to update what was an aging curriculum under the leadership of Dr. Danielle Cooper. In the fall of 2015, the committee met several times to identify areas for improvement in the concentration curriculum and to review course descriptions from undergraduate and graduate program/certificates related to juvenile justice at nine colleges and universities. In the fall of 2016, the Department of Criminal Justice proposed changes to the juvenile justice curriculum that would assist in building a more passionate, reform-oriented, competent and dedicated group of students who, as part of the workforce, will influence the future of juvenile justice, and seek to keep prevention, diversion, and intervention at the forefront of the conversation on juvenile justice reform.

Concentrating in Youth Justice

The description of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Concentration states, "Exposure to up-to-date empirical analyses of the criminal justice system will prepare students to communicate with youth and young adults who are at-risk for introduction with and/or penetration into the juvenile justice system, as well as those who will work from within or alongside the juvenile justice system. This core curriculum informs students about the prevention, diversion, and intervention services as well as brain development that are essential to the implementation of program administration, law enforcement, and local/state/federal legislation."

cover story continued...

The newly offered curriculum includes classes that challenge students to think critically about the nature of crime, the characteristics of individuals engaged in crime, and the operations of the justice systems, including brain development and maturity. The learning that takes place inside the classroom is augmented by opportunities to engage in experiential learning, study abroad, faculty-directed research, academic service-learning, and/or an internship/co-operative work experience. Since the University is a leader in experiential education, the Department of Criminal Justice requires all students to participate in an internship, but many students also explore additional experiential education opportunities. This training helps students integrate their personal and educational experiences into practical and professional settings.



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TYJI Goals for Youth Justice Education

Overall, the Tow Youth Justice Institutes (TYJI) desires to create reformers in the current and future workforce through its four primary goals: a transformational leadership development program for mid-level leaders working in the juvenile justice field; expanding the undergraduate and graduate curriculum to broaden course offerings that support the formation of an innovative youth justice program; increased experiential opportunities for students; and research, evaluation, training, planning and policy development in order to integrate evidence-based practices and programs in the youth justice system.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Cooper at dcooper@newhaven.edu with any questions or to learn more.



Like us on Facebook and Follow us on Twitter @towyouth

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Proposed Juvenile Justice Reforms in 2017

The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) and its four workgroups, (Diversion, Incarceration, Recidivism, and Cross Agency Data Sharing) were tasked upon its inception in 2014, to collaboratively develop system-wide and research driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state of Connecticut.

Since then, work of the JJPOC members and its workgroups have presented two years of legislation that has moved the needle on meeting the strategic goals they have set.

By July 2018:

- Increase diversion of children and youth from juvenile justice system by 20%.
- Decrease the number of children and youth confined in state-run facilities by 30%.
- Decrease the rate of recidivism among juveniles by 10%.

Throughout the 2016 year, strategies were developed in how to best divert youth from entry into the juvenile justice system, how to move children out of the system while maintaining community safety, and how to support youth against recidivating.

In January 2017 the workgroups presented and proposed to the JJPOC legislative recommendations that will further its efforts in meeting their strategic goals. The 2017 JJPOC legislative recommendations were introduced by the Judiciary Committee as House Bill No. 7286 "An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the JJPOC".

The following are some of the strategies that can be found in HB 7286:

1. Effective July 1, 2019, children identified as Families with Service Needs (FWSN) will no longer be referred to the courts. This recommendation addresses the remaining categories under the FWSN law. The major FWSN category - truants - has already been removed from juvenile court jurisdiction effective August 15, 2017.
2. The Department of Education will begin implementation of a centralized community-based diversion system, prioritizing localities that refer the highest number of youth into the juvenile justice system. The diversion system tasks the state's Youth Service Bureaus with addressing 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.
3. Starting July 1, 2019, children under the age of 18 who have been transferred to adult jurisdiction will be held in the custody of the Judicial Branch which has pretrial custody of children in the juvenile justice system.
4. Starting July 1, 2019, youth under the age of 18 cannot be held after sentencing in Department of Corrections custody. This provision will require planning in the interim to ensure appropriate alternative placements are identified.

Children held in adult facilities are vulnerable to abuse and mental illness, and often do not receive the supports they need to get on the right track. This legislative change ensures children who must be removed from the community are housed in the most age and developmentally appropriate place that provides comprehensive services to meet their programming needs.

5. Beginning in 2018, the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) will report annually on juvenile recidivism so that policymakers can ensure that our juvenile justice system is safe and cost-effective.
6. DCF and the Children's Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board, which are already charged with planning mental health services

for youth, will extend their focus to making specific recommendations for meeting the needs of youth who are risk of system involvement.

The JJPOC will collaborate with the Children's Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board to identify the elements of the behavioral health service array that are most appropriate for addressing the mental health and substance use needs of children diverted, on probation, released from detention and from CJTS, and the costs associated with enhancing identified system components, policies and procedures.

The 2017 recommendations of the JJPOC" focus on comprehensive strategies that are supported by research and best practices that directly impact and enhance the wellbeing of children so that they do not become involved in the juvenile justice system; and manage and service those who do become involved in a way that maximizes the opportunity for successful behavior change.

Due to the fiscal impact of HB 7286, it did not pass during the regular session. It is hoped that it may get considered during the special session to approve a state budget. Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates on this proposed set of reforms as they become available.

The Tow Youth Justice Institute at the University of New Haven is grateful for the hard work of the JJPOC and workgroup members. Their tireless work has shown significant results over the past two years of legislation and with approval of this year, the promise for more improvement in the juvenile justice system and meeting the strategic goals.



Christine Rapillo, Chief Public Defender for the State of Connecticut and JJPOC member presents progress of the Recidivism Reduction Workgroup.

Advisory Council

On Wednesday, April 19th 2017, the Tow Youth Justice Institute held its first Advisory Council meeting that brought together local, state and national experts in the juvenile justice and other fields reflecting a community-based focus that aligns with the breadth of factors that lead youth to interact with the juvenile justice system. The purpose of the Tow Youth Justice Institute Advisory Council is to assist and help grow the youth justice work of the Institute by 1) identifying potential new strategic directions for study or action, 2) developing connections to national organizations and other public and private partners for potentially important collaborative projects, and 3) identifying new opportunities for core funding to support the ongoing work of the Institute.

Members meet three times over the course of each year. They hear updates on the Institute's work and provide relevant input and information from their area that relate to youth justice in the state and nationally, and propose new ideas for research and ways to improve the youth justice system.

Please visit our website at newhaven.edu/towyouth to learn more about our members.

Ms. Pamela Allen Chairperson New Haven Reentry Roundtable	Dr. Byron Kennedy Director City of New Haven Health Department	Ms. Frances Padilla President Universal Health Care Foundation	Mr. Mark White Deputy Commissioner Juvenile Justice State of New York
Ms. Christina Ciociola Senior Vice President, Grant Making & Strategy Community Foundation for Greater New Haven	Ms. Judith McBride Senior Program Officer Hartford Foundation for Public Giving	Mr. Marc Schindler Executive Director Justice Policy Institute	Ex Officio Ms. Emily Tow Jackson President The Tow Foundation
Dr. Alice Forrester Executive Director Clifford Beers Child Clinic	Dr. Judith Meyers President & CEO Child Health and Development Institute of CT	Ms. Sandra Trevino Executive Director Junta for Progressive Action	Mr. William Carbone Executive Director Tow Youth Justice Institute
Reverend Bonita Grubbs Executive Director Christian Community Action	Mr. Christopher M. O'Connor Executive Vice President Chief Operating Officer Yale New Haven Health	Ms. Nancy Von Euler Vice President of Programs Fairfield County's Community Foundation	Dr. Mario Gaboury Dean, Henry C. Lee College for Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences

Sharing Connecticut's Experience with Raise the Age in New York State and Nationally

Given the Tow Youth Justice Institute's (TYJI) role in supporting the JJPOC and the extensive expertise of its staff and faculty, the TYJI has become recognized as a leader in juvenile justice reform, and has been called upon to share the knowledge it has developed. When the State of New York's Governor Mario Cuomo announced at the end of 2016, a new Youth Justice Institute to promote best practices to reduce recidivism, improve outcomes and enhance public safety, he cited the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) as the model to be replicated. To develop the strategies they would employ and begin a conversation about Raise the Age, the TYJI was called upon to present the successes in Connecticut in juvenile justice reform and how the Institute functions to support the work of juvenile justice reform.

By 2012, the State of Connecticut had raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 18. Prior to the passing of that legislation, Connecticut was one of only three states handling 16 and 17 year olds in the adult court system, even for minor offenses. Before the Raise the Age legislation, the juvenile justice system in Connecticut was experiencing some challenges. High court intake, high detention admissions, poor conditions of confinement and lack of services.

Through the implementation of Raise the Age legislation and many other evidence-based practices and programs, Connecticut has become a bell-wether in system reform.



William H. Carbone, Executive Director, Tow Youth Justice Institute
March 30, 2017 presentation to Juvenile Justice Officials, Rochester, NY

While every state has a different structure for the juvenile justice system and must create the path they will follow toward building a better system, many states that raised the age are exploring initiatives that are in alignment with the path to juvenile justice reform that Connecticut followed:

- Expand the use of diversion.
- Make probation and aftercare approaches more effective through the adoption of risk reduction frameworks, practices and programming.
- Address young people's mental health needs.
- Reduce the use of pretrial detention.
- Reduce reliance on facilities and focus resources on community-based approaches.

Some of the major system reform efforts that have been implemented in addition to Raise the Age include:




- Changing its community supervision approach to prohibit young people from being detained or re-committed to a facility based simply on a technical probation violation,
- Relying more on home-based counseling and treatment thereby reducing out of home placements,
- Using needs-based assessment instruments to assess what a young person needs and identify potential risks associated with his or her prior behavior, and
- Using this information to align its practices through a cost-benefit lens.

The Connecticut experience offers some advice for states now considering a raise in the age - take time to determine what needs to be measured and use a results-based accountability model; use a phased-in approach developed collaboratively with child welfare and public and private agencies; and determine how to create an infrastructure that includes staffing, training, programs, quality assurance, and performance outcomes.

Today, with reforms in place that began in 2007 with the first Raise the Age legislation, 16 and 17 year old's are now in the Juvenile Justice System; the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS), the state's only juvenile correctional facility, will be closing on July 1, 2018; status offenders are being removed from Juvenile Court entirely; there is reinvestment of savings in diversion; there are systems for accountability; and Raise the Age to 21 has been proposed by Governor Malloy.


In addition to supporting the State of New York in their process of developing a reformed JJ system, the TYJI presented at national forums, and a webinar of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in D.C. on May 10th. In addition to TYJI's Bill Carbone, Marc Schindler, J.D., Executive Director of the Justice Policy Institute; Jason Ziedenberg, M.S., Director of Policy and Research at the Justice Policy Institute, and Marcy Mistrett, M.A., Chief Executive Officer at the Campaign for Youth Justice participated in the webinar.

Please visit newhaven.edu/towyouth and click on the events page to watch the webinar and download materials.



Connecticut Juvenile Justice "After" Reforms Ready for Raise the Age

- Court intake
- Detention intake
- Placement waits in detention
- Commitment to "out of home"
- Juvenile crime rates
- Probation recidivism
- No status offenders in detention



This slide was presented in the webinar to highlight the improvements in Connecticut Juvenile Justice system.