

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.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Recent Student Events

Celebrating Juvenile Justice Reformers - An Inside Look at Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program

Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee Update

Student Spotlight Gabriela Brito

Emily Tow Jackson Receives Honorary Degree

Recent Community Events

RECENT STUDENT EVENTS

Student Open House - Open Doors to Your Future

Thursday, November 9, 2017 @ 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences students learned about new Juvenile Justice Reform, hear about the Juvenile Justice Concentration in the Criminal Justice Degree, explore careers in Juvenile Justice, find opportunities for Experiential Learning and create a way to make a difference.

CT's Second Chance Act in Action - Visit to the Cheshire Correctional Facility T.R.U.E. Unit for Youthful Offenders

Wednesday, November 29, 2017 @ 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Criminal Justice students toured -the Cheshire TRUE (Truthfulness, Respectfulness, Understanding, Elevating) Unit for young men, ages - 18 to 25. The young men have access to developmentally appropriate programming that seeks to engage them as productive members of society. Young men (mentees) began integrating into the unit at the end of January 2017.

CELEBRATING JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORMERS

Fellows from Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program use learnings to move reform work forward



Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program was developed in 2015 based upon significant input from a focus group of statewide leaders experienced in juvenile justice. The goals for the program are to:

- build the capacity of present and future leaders as agents of change, transforming youth justice from a community response paradigm
- advance leadership development skills and knowledge of best practices in reform, organizational and community change, and
- be a resource to the organizations, communities, and systems serving youth through a network of dedicated leaders.

Candidates for the program are those involved in the youth justice field and employed as mid-level managers in law enforcement/policing, state and local government, public and private agencies, non-profit service providers, and includes broader community members such as middle and high schools educators, policymakers, community leaders, faith leaders, parents, and advocates.

Participation in the Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development program increases visibility and links leaders to state and national level juvenile justice system changes. The program design strengthens "collaborative leadership" among individuals, organizations, and regional/state networks.

Content

The curriculum is intended to ensure a current and future workforce of youth justice leaders who are committed, competent and passionate about making the system work

cover story continued...

Collaborators in Transforming Youth Justice

2015

In its initial year, a focus group was convened to respond to ideas and strategies being designed for the nine-month program. Participants included not only TYJI staff, Henry C. Lee College faculty and students, but also representatives from the Department of Children and Families, State Office of the Child Advocate, Division of the Public Defender, and legislative and judicial representatives from the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee.

2016

The first Cohort group of the program was made possible through funding from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Tow Foundation. Fifteen fellows participated from non-profit organizations, municipal police departments, local public schools and the State of Connecticut Court Support Services Division.

2017

The second Cohort group was made possible with support from the Tow Foundation. Sixteen fellows participated from non-profit organizations, youth service bureau, community foundation, University of New Haven Police Department, municipal police, State of Connecticut Court Support Services Division and Department of Children and Families.

2018

The third Cohort group is being funded by the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The application process has taken place and candidates will be identified for the program by the end of February.

effectively to support positive change for young people in our communities. Session topics include CT's juvenile justice system, adolescent development and trauma, getting results (data and outcomes), advocacy, youth justice initiatives, and family and community engagement.

Three components are emphasized for the core curriculum for the Transforming Youth Justice program within each session: leadership development skills; youth justice reforms; and best practices in core competencies including empirical research, data utilization, system collaboration and presentation skills. Cohort leaders explore the current youth justice system operating within the state and identify collaborative leadership opportunities to advance reform efforts. The program creates safe spaces for learning and critical reflection on a developmental approach to juvenile justice (e.g. adolescent brain research), the use of best practices (family outreach and active engagement), and tools for measuring results (RBA

and data-driven decisions).

This nine-month program culminates with leaders creating and presenting research-based Capstone Proposals to translate dialogue into action on critical youth justice issues at the local, regional and/or statewide level. Graduates become part of an alumni fellows network to keep momentum going and facilitate leadership and best practices in the fields of community youth development and juvenile justice across systems, and statewide to better serve youth and families.

Program Highlights

The Leadership program successfully completed the first two annual cohorts in 2016 and 2017 and after two years, 31 leaders in



Graduates of Cohort #1



Graduates of Cohort #2

reform have taken their new knowledge and expertise back to their professional jobs in the field of juvenile justice. As agents of change, they now form an Alumni Network as a resource for youth justice reform regionally and statewide. Cohort leaders developed Capstone proposals through a guided process utilizing collaborative leadership skills and The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®, explored relevant youth justice topics, and prepared and delivered presentations on best practices, and their key areas of learning. Proposals address changes in truancy legislation (removing truancy as a status offense), enhance police and youth interactions, explore diversion programs through use of Restorative Justice Practices, Teen Youth Court and Drug Court, recommend and implement agency changes to LGBTQ policy for Juvenile Detention and Residential Services, focus on

stopping bullying, and create collaborations of state agencies and service providers sharing resources and supporting youth and families within their region.

Leaders from a broad base of state and local agencies, organizations, providers and communities who actively work with and on behalf of youth and families bring a range of perspectives, practices, and experiences from different communities and constituencies that foster deeper understanding of CT youth and their communities while creating opportunities for collaboration and reform at a systems level. Leaders explore relevant legislation, policy and practice changes. A variety of Tow Youth Justice Institute faculty and staff, individuals involved in the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) provide subject matter expertise for cohort leaders to experience “real time” reform efforts as well as the historical context of juvenile justice reform in CT. Topics include adolescent brain development and trauma, and empirical research through data utilization, outcomes and decision-making.

Field experiences were incorporated into the second cohort. The 2017 leaders visited and toured the Department of Correction Cheshire Correctional Institute T.R.U.E. (Truth, Respect, Understanding, Elevate into Success) unit, meeting individuals serving life sentences and young men ages 18-25 at the facility. The experience broadened leaders’ perspectives on youth justice reform to include the emerging adult population and fostered deep discussions about the program, second chances, and reform.

Graduates now comprise the Leadership Alumni Network and have opportunities to participate in statewide reform efforts by joining JJPOC workgroups and subgroups, nominate and recommend colleagues for new cohorts, review candidate applications, and conduct peer review of presentations. The first cohort of alumni are completing a one year follow up survey providing updates on their capstones, leadership advancement or attainment, and youth justice reform efforts in their organizations and communities.

Featured Alumni Fellows



Angelina Wilson (2017)

Angelina is the founder and director of Keepsakes, Inc., a mentoring program serving New Haven young people to assure their access to information, program services and future growth opportunities. She is active with the African American Women’s Summit, specifically in their work to Unite Our Community through Activism and Social Justice Conference. During the October field visit to the CT Department of Correction, Cheshire Correctional Institute, T.R.U.E. Unit a young man spoke to her during the tour and said “Thank you for seeing our humanity.” So moved by the experience, Angelina initiated a group effort for a collective “gift of literacy”. The process engaged the young men in creating a “wish” list of authors and books not currently available to them. The list of more than 40 approved books was distributed widely and interested individuals purchased and shipped them directly to the prison library at the T.R.U.E. unit.



Michael Pavano (2016)

Michael A. Pavano, a 2016 Leadership Alumni Fellow, is a high school Art teacher and a member of the New Haven New Light High School Administrative Team. Mike worked more than 18 years in the field of law enforcement. As a police officer, he identified the need for education to effect positive change within a community. His Capstone proposal in collaboration with six other cohort leaders focused on improving relations between young people and the police, not only for New Haven, but also for teens and cops across the state. Mike is currently enhancing his high school’s climate and relationships with students through use of Restorative Practices and Listening Circles. Mike is also active in supporting the Youth Stat program led by the New Haven Youth Services, the New Haven Police Department, and the Board of Education.

Thank you to our funders of the Transforming Youth Justice Leadership Development Program



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CONGRATULATIONS TO EMILY TOW JACKSON

The University of New Haven was proud to honor Emily Tow Jackson, President and Executive Director of The Tow Foundation, with an honorary Doctor of Criminal Justice degree on Sunday, December 10th. Emily has been a strong supporter of the University and the Tow Youth Justice Institute for many years. Her family's foundation established the Tow Youth Justice Institute in October 2014 to ensure the momentum in reforming the juvenile justice system in Connecticut. Youth Justice reform has been a focus area for their foundation for over a decade. Emily's father Leonard received an honorary degree from the University of New Haven in 2016. We are so grateful to the Tow Family and pleased to congratulate Emily on her doctoral degree.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Gabriela Brito is a Masters student studying criminal justice at the University of New Haven. Gabriela has recently been inducted into UNH's Alpha Tau Chapter of the National Criminal Justice Honor Society, Alpha Phi Sigma. Aside from excelling in her academic career, Gabriela works as a graduate assistant with the Tow Youth Justice Institute. Gabriela works directly with Erika Nowakowski assisting on various policy and administrative tasks. She attends multiple workgroup and subgroup meetings as well as the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) monthly meeting. Specifically, Gabriela has been ensuring that work group meetings and the monthly JJPOC meetings run smoothly by assisting with drafting the agenda, meeting minutes, PowerPoint, and other material.. Gabriela will be graduating this upcoming May and hopes to continue working within the Juvenile Justice System.



RECENT COMMUNITY EVENT

On January 18, 2018, the Tow Youth Justice Institute hosted an event, Transforming Education for Youth in Connecticut's Justice System, at the State Capitol in collaboration with the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, FAVOR, Inc. and the Center for Children's Advocacy. Panelists Kate Burdick, Staff Attorney at the Juvenile Law Center, Woody Clift, Director of Department of Youth Services Education Initiative for the Collaborative for Educational Services, Kathleen O'Neill Sande, Student Advocate, Yancy Singleton, AmeriCorps Public Ally, Paraprofessional at Stamford Academy, and Leon Smith, Director of the Racial Justice Project at the Center for Children's Advocacy, discussed the troubling status quo and about best practices for from their experiences in educating youth in custody.



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