

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 the third Thursday of every month at 2 p.m., via Zoom and can be viewed on ct-n.com.

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2020 Fall Newsletter Student Contributors!



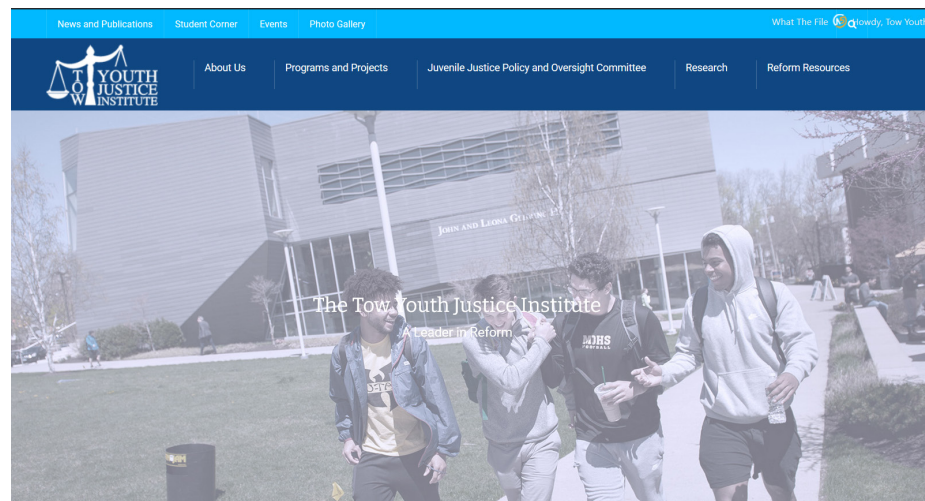
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Tow Youth Justice Institute has a brand new website!

Since March, 2020 has shaped up to be a year of immense change and adjustments. From academic institutions and workplaces to everyone at home, we have adapted to new policies and mandates that affect our daily lives. Through it all, the Tow Youth Justice Institute has remained dedicated to the justice and advancement of youth and was able to reinforce our new efforts with a brand-new website that launched in September.



The easily navigated and professionally designed website features the work of students, faculty, interns, and the community in conjunction with the TYJI's work. You will find our strategic goals, programs and projects, Issue Briefs, our research, the very important multi-system partners who make our work possible, and recommendations made by the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee and their reforms.

Our new website is also the best place to find national and local youth justice resources that touch on the various factors that lead youth into the juvenile justice system. These include law enforcement and legal aid programs that educate both law enforcement and the legal system on how juveniles are affected by mental health and their living environments. The Justice for Families and National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice contribute to those efforts, along with others listed on our National Resources page.

cover story continued...

University students and interns directly involved with the TYJI have a place to be recognized on the website. The student corner page shows appreciation for their work toward the growth of the Institute. The TYJI may have a new website, but our mission remains the same. We continue to be a place that includes University of New Haven students in innovative youth justice and juvenile reform programs.

Article by Brikitta Hairston
Communications Intern

The Tow Youth Justice Institute would like to thank the University's Marketing Department for their assistance in making this a reality!



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Transforming Youth Justice Leadership in a Virtual Reality

The Tow Youth Justice Institute: Transforming Youth Justice; A Leadership Development Program has kicked off the fifth cohort and introduced fifteen participants to the journey of gaining new skills in leadership, collaboration, youth justice reform, knowledge of best practices and organizational and community change. Cohort members come from diverse backgrounds with representation from various organizations such as Department of Children and Families, Department of Corrections, Court Support Services Division of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Wheeler Clinic, Resource Justice Inc. Yale-New Haven Hospital and more. The program is run by Erika Nowakowski, Associate Director of TYJI, Richard Concepcion, Graduate Assistant and Susan Cusano, Office Manager.

Due to COVID-19, the fifth cohort had a delay start but is up and running and in its fourth session. The delayed start allowed for modification and curriculum enhancements so that cohort members did not miss on the full experience. The curriculum enhancement consists of utilizing an online platform, Zoom for its monthly sessions.



us the opportunity to interact with cohort participants, conduct and share presentations, view and discuss videos, and hold breakout rooms.

The monthly session is divided into two parts. The first part of the day focuses on topics that may include

developing leadership skills, working collaboratively, enhancing skills in self-awareness, and understanding the importance of being future reformers. The second part of the day we invite guest speakers who are content expert in the juvenile justice system. This allows for our cohort participants to hear and learn about Connecticut juvenile justice system, what we can learn from the data, what is happening nationally, and strategies and best practices that can lead to reform. Examples of some of the guest speakers are Devon McCormick, Restorative Justice Practices Project Manager, who discussed Restorative Justice Practices, Bill Car-bone, Executive Director, who presented about youth justice reform work at the Tow Youth Justice Institute, Dr. Melissa Whitson, Associate Professor in the Psychology Department, who discussed child development and trauma, and Iliana Pujols, Director of Community Connections at the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, on youth and family engagement.

Other enhancements to the curriculum consist of Technical Assistance provided between each month virtually and in small groups. The technical assistance allows for cohort members to brainstorm, trouble shoot, work collaboratively, and learn from each other.

This new cohort has been remarkably resilient as we are continuing to educate the future leaders of today virtually and enhance their knowledge, skills, and passion for the field of juvenile justice. We are very excited to see the program continue and improve as we prepare for graduation in the upcoming months.

~Article by Richie Concepcion

University of New Haven Chargers Navigating the COVID-19 Adjustments with Stride



To keep the spread of COVID-19 low and everyone on campus healthy, hybrid and online classes are anticipated to be a long-term part of University life. There were estimates done by the American Economic Review stating that “online courses do less to promote student academic success and progression than do in-person courses,” but there were stipulations saying that “if developed properly, online classes may increase efficiency and course productivity.” These truths live in the academic development of our students, and the teaching capabilities of our faculty. There is a learning curve for everyone, one that can only be achieved together. Dr. Danielle Cooper, associate professor in the department of Criminal Justice and Director of Research here at the TYJI agrees that “it was tough to start this school year with such a different pace and energy on campus,” but was able to continue her research with TYJI interns by holding weekly meetings to increase communication, and “maximizing online resources such as Microsoft 365, Zoom, and LinkedIn Learning to better acclimate to the fully online environment.” Dr. Cooper is teaching four classes this semester and remains nimble to accommodate the need to move online as needed.



When speaking with Professor William Carbone, Senior Lecturer, Director of Experiential Education and Executive Director of TYJI, he agreed that the safety of students was held as the utmost

responsibility, especially with the outbreak in late October that paused in-person instruction. He stated that students “are conscious of social distancing, are respectful of the guidelines, [and] are wearing masks,” so it shows that adhering to the COVID guidelines is the best thing for students and faculty. Feeling safe is an important aspect of everyone’s experience on campus, and Professor Carbone believes that “overall [the] university has done a great job.” Internships and co-ops have been a challenge for his students, so there is a worry that experiential education will be affected long term, but the hope is to remain diligent in these times so that the future is not left to chance.



The TYJI team will continue to work remotely per University guidelines until 2021 to ensure the safety of our staff and students. The hope is to remain ahead of the challenges to be faced, and have plans in place when the inevitable happens. The University of New Haven is a stellar symbol for **CHARGING** on, moving swiftly and carefully, and keeping the University experience in mind for everyone who makes our Campus a home.

~Article by Brikitta Hairston



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Connecticut Institute for Police and Youth Relations Launches with Funders' Support

The development of the Connecticut Institute for Police and Youth Relations began in 2018. The partnership of the Tow Youth Justice Institute and the Center for Advanced Policing engaged the Strategies for Youth organization in the early development of a curriculum with a planning grant from the Singer Foundation. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving expressed interest early on in supporting a pilot cohort of police officer trainees.

Full development of the program began when Dr. Lorenzo Boyd joined the University and became the Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Policing. He and Dr. Danielle Cooper came together to craft a comprehensive approach to training youth-serving police officers that integrates concepts of youth justice and community policing. They engaged other faculty members who had various expertise that would make the training stronger. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving remained interested and accepted an application for a first Cohort in the Greater Hartford area. They brought on the Travelers Championship, who they work with every year, as an additional funder for the program.

Primary outcomes from this program will include improved youth/police interaction, police gaining a better understanding of youth development, decreased incidents of excessive force, and increased use of diversion programs. Other outcomes will include support for effective strategies with youth that can be replicable and scalable across Connecticut. The goal is to promote a unified and consistently effective approach to policing youth across a jurisdiction in which police come to recognize their role as gatekeepers to the criminal justice system.

Kickoff of the pilot cohort will begin in early 2021! To learn more about the police training program, visit towyouth.newhaven.edu/CIPYR.

CIYPR is looking for a Coordinator! Please visit towyouth.newhaven.edu/CIYPRCoordinator for a job description and application instructions. Applications will be accepted through November 13th!

Improving Outcomes for Youth (IOYouth) Statewide Task Force Year-long Assessment Complete

In June 2019, leadership from Connecticut's three branches of government—Governor Ned Lamont, Judge Patrick Carroll, and Representative Toni Walker – launched the Improving Outcomes for Youth (IOYouth) Statewide Task Force with the goal of assessing whether recent juvenile justice system reforms have been implemented as intended and have had the expected impact. The Task Force's charge was to determine what next steps are needed to ensure that policies, practices, and resource allocation decisions are aligned with what the research says works to strengthen public safety and improve outcomes for youth. The IOYouth Task Force, co-chaired by Rep. Walker and Melissa McCaw, Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, included other elected officials, representatives from all three branches of government, state and local juvenile justice system leaders, and advocates, among others.

Under the guidance of the Task Force, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center conducted a year-long comprehensive assessment of Connecticut's juvenile justice system from referral to reentry. The IOYouth Task Force met several times in 2019 and 2020 to review the CSG Justice Center's assessment findings and identify data-driven strategies to improve outcomes for youth. In July 2020, the Task Force convened its final meeting and reached consensus on a broad set of research-based policy recommendations to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

Visit towyouth.newhaven.edu/IOYouth to view the presentations and towyouth.newhaven.edu/IOYouthRecommendations to read the Task Force's recommendations.

WE HAVE A DUTY TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST RACIAL INJUSTICE

#BLACKLIVESMATTER

In America, you can be killed while you are sleeping. In America, you can be killed while you are fighting for your rights. In America, you are more likely to be killed if you are Black. The intersection of historically racist law enforcement and the prejudiced treatment of Black Americans create the injustices oppressing them.

Before Black Lives Matter protests flooded the streets across the nation, Breonna Taylor was in her own Louisville home while she slept in her bed on the night of March 13th. Four officers fired over 20 rounds into the apartment after her boyfriend fired the first round believing intruders were attempting to break in. The police officers claimed to be carrying out a no-knock search warrant, but conflicting sources say they did not announce themselves before breaking in. Jonathan Mattingly, Myles Cosgrove, and Brett Hankison, were simply placed on administrative leave. As of early September, a law was passed in her name to ban no-knock warrants. Following the increasing protests, three counts of wanton endangerment were brought toward Brett Hankison only and he was fired, stating that he showed “an extreme indifference to the value of human life.” Those who took to the streets and flooded social media specifically for Breonna simply wanted an arrest for her killers. In late September, a grand jury indicted the former Louisville police officer for wanton endangerment concerning his actions during the raid. There were still no charges filed against the other 2 officers who fired their weapons and still, no one has been charged for Breonna Taylor’s death. On October 2nd, 15 hours of audio from grand jury proceedings were released to provide some insight as to what went on during those hearings. Grand jurors who were given permission to speak about the case state there was never an option to bring homicide charges against any officers involved in Breonna Taylor’s death.

Many protestors in the Black Lives Matter movement in May and June were doing so in outrage of George Floyd, a Black man killed by police on May 25th of this year. Misogyny knows no bounds and can still push through the radical rebirth of the Black Lives Matter movement. It took over 2 months for Breonna Taylor to get an inkling of justice, and for protestors to attract a fraction of media attention for her. The no-knock law does not change much for her, but George Floyd’s killers were charged within the week, in jail and held without bail. So, the parallels between Black Americans, and Black men and women, have remained the same. Who then, does America really stand for? Who then, does America believe when they say Black Lives Matter?

It’s no such minor coincidence considering Oluwatoyin ‘Toyin’ Salau, an activist, had been protesting since the outcry for George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and stood up for them both before she was killed. Law enforcement took no action on her pleas for help. The timeline of her tweets have a detailed account of her being attacked which went viral on June 6th. At that time, she reported the crime to the police, but as they did nothing, she went back out on her own to find shelter. Her missing person’s report from Tallahassee Police was not posted until 3 days after her report and her body was found on June 13th. Many critics will argue the old-time black on black crime approach, but the essence is that Oluwatoyin thought she could trust the police. The police did not advocate for her, they did not search for the physical description, car description, and age she provided. We are again, left wondering, what would have happened if she were white? Her body was found next to Vicki Sims, a 75-year-old woman and retired community volunteer and state worker, who is speculated to have been helping Toyin to safety. Could the trajectory of their deaths been avoided? After all, Sims’ phone was found at the home of Glee Jr., Toyin’s attacker, whom police confirmed matched the physical description she initially gave.

Activists and policy makers alike will argue that personal choices are indicators of future crimes committed against Black women but when there is a pattern, a distinct array of one same thing matching thousands of others, what is there to argue? The deaths of Breonna Taylor and Oluwatoyin Salau are the repugnant representation of injustice toward Black women both in law enforcement and society. The two sides of one proverbially broken coin collapse on the black woman’s experience, her life, and her choices. Oluwatoyin Salau was only 19 years old. Breonna Taylor was only 26. They had plans, dreams, hopes, and a humanity crushed by the trust we’re expected to have for the people who call themselves our protectors.

Here at the University of New Haven, campus policy makers and those in charge have made strides toward the inclusion and advancement of their diverse community. The OrganizeUnewHaven organization is dedicated to the inclusion of diverse voices, while pulling together their thoughts and aspirations to make a better community for all Chargers. This is one step toward improving diversity in student organizations in a nuanced way, that does not make our diverse community feel obligated to speak for everyone, and instead feel their own voice. The Campus Climate Coalition for diversity, inclusion, and equity and access this past summer has also stepped up and provided new ways for students to get involved and feel included in the University of New Haven’s efforts for diversity on campus. The goal is not immediate change or quick improvement, but for a gradual effort that reminds Black Americans daily that their voices are heard, and acknowledgement of past injustice is not far behind.

What A Difference Ten Years Makes

Connecticut has been a pioneer in the Raise the Age legislation, changing automatic prosecution of 16-year olds to 18-year olds as adults, a policy reform that's proven to reduce juvenile delinquency and recidivism rates in Connecticut. Among the other successful outcomes noted below, 11 states joined Connecticut in the Raise the Age practice. Mississippi, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Missouri, New Hampshire, Michigan, Louisiana, Vermont, and South Carolina raised the age from 16 to 18 years of age, and experienced a drop in the arrest rate for 18 to 21-year-olds.

At a press conference on February 10th 2020, the 10th anniversary of Raise the Age, an in-depth review of how raising the age of juvenile prosecution was a vital step toward reducing juvenile crime and advocating for juvenile justice reform was shared. Amidst fears that Raise the Age legislation would double the impact on the juvenile justice system, double court intake, cause the detention population to increase, and increase recidivism from juvenile probation, juvenile crime was down 40%, court referrals were down 63%, detention population decreased 77%, and the 24 month re-arrest rate was down 7%.

In addition, the belief that Raise the Age legislation would not impact or improve the adult correctional system was not founded. Even including arrests of 18 - 21 year olds, the incarceration rates was down 66%. The Connecticut Juvenile Training School and the only secure facility for boys were closed in 2018. Even prior to its closing, Connecticut's incarcerated youth numbers had dropped by 69% between 2009-2017 belying the prediction that there would be a need for more juvenile correctional facilities.



Tow Youth Justice Institute/University of New Haven awarded 2020 OJJDP Title II, Part B, Formula Grants Program

In September, the Tow Youth Justice Institute received notice that the University of New Haven was awarded the 2020 round of non-participating states funding. The project being funded is "Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities through Local and Statewide Strategies". TYJI's sub-grantees in this work are the Center for Children's Law and Policy and Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership. The work will include utilizing Restorative Practices (RP) to improve the school climate and resolve conflict in the Bridgeport Public Schools and developing a roadmap for the JJPOC's RED Workgroup to address and implement strategies that reduce racial and ethnic disparities that still exist in many decision points in the juvenile justice system. This piece of the project will pick up on working currently taking place with the JJPOC's RED Workgroup.

Please visit newhaven.edu/towyouth for more information about the Tow Youth Justice Institute. Please scan the image to read our other Issue Briefs and Quarterly Newsletters.



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