

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM, NEWSLETTER, 2022-2023



Volume 2, Issue 1

PREVIEW

- New Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice
- New courses offered and added to the catalog
- MPA Program with a Criminal Justice Track
- Administrative Changes
- Faculty Accomplishments
- The Outstanding Criminal Justice Student
- Learning about the history of the Criminal Justice Program



Left: Avonley Powers, Class of 2023
Right: Suzan Coleman, Emeritus
Professor of Criminal Justice

GREETINGS CRIMINAL JUSTICE

STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS OF THE PROGRAM,

Hopefully, you are having a fantastic Summer break and survived the flood of Summer 2023 unscathed! We had another successful and exciting academic year in the Criminal Justice Program!

News and Happenings Around the Program

In Fall 2022, we welcomed a new assistant professor to the Criminal Justice Program—Dr. Joel E. Denney. Dr. Denney completed his Ph.D. at Texas State University during the Summer of 2022. His dissertation, *The Legitimacy of the Police and Courts Around the World*, analyzed micro and macro-level predictors of police legitimacy in over 40 countries. He also previously collaborated with the late Dr. Mitchell Chamlin in his research on the macro-level effects of social welfare programs, co-authoring an article published in the *Journal of Crime and Justice*. We are very excited about the diversity of ideas Dr. Denney brings to the Criminal Justice Program. He teaches *Juvenile Delinquency*, *Admin Criminal Justice Organizations*, *Intro to Criminal Justice*, *Criminology*, *Research Methods*, and other courses. We are so happy he is here and acclimating to the Program well!

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In the Fall of 2022, the Criminal Justice students and faculty took an amazing educational trip to Southern Texas and visited Sam Houston State University and other great criminal justice sights. We learned

about graduate education from Sam Houston State University. We toured the Texas State Penitentiary at

Huntsville, saw the “body farm,” and visited many great museums and sights there. The Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences was gracious enough to fund most of the trip for our students, so we are very thankful to the College and donors for making that possible and to Professor Jordan for her hard work planning the trip.

We continue to offer new courses to meet the demands of our students and the ever-evolving criminal justice system. Sgt. Gordon Eatley continued to do great work teaching our *Advanced Criminal Investigations* course and started teaching a new class for the Program, *Advanced Forensics*. We plan on officially adding *Advanced Forensics* to the catalog this Fall. We appreciate Professor Eatley’s continued dedication to improving the Criminal Justice Program and our students. We also added Professor Arpero’s *Violence Against Women* course to the catalog officially, CRIJ 3380. Previously this course was a “Special Topics” course, but we are excited to have such an important course officially on the catalog. Professor Arpero is also teaching a new class in the Fall of 2023, *Criminal Psychology*. Domestic violence and mental health remain large issues in the Panhandle and the nation. We are excited that Professor Arpero is providing these important courses for our students!

“We continue to offer new courses to meet the demands of our students and the ever-evolving criminal justice system.”

The fully online MPA graduate degree, with a track in Criminal Justice, was approved last year, and we welcomed our first students in the Fall of 2022. The Criminal Justice Program is excited to work with Political Science and Emergency Management to offer a quality graduate degree that students and WT can be proud of. You can find more information about the MPA Program [here](#). We are also excited that Criminal Justice is heavily involved in the degree. Dr. Kim taught her first graduate course in the MPA Program during the Spring of 2022, and Dr. Denney will teach a class in the Fall of 2023. Although Criminal Justice plays a large part in the MPA Program, we still have our on-campus MA degree in Criminal Justice. Fortunately, the courses we offer for the MPA Program also fulfill the requirements for the MA degree in Criminal Justice.

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NEWS

Dr. Joel Denney received his Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Texas State University. He is our new Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and started in the Fall of 2022.



There have been a lot of administrative changes in the last year. Dr. Reed Welch was appointed Department Head for Political Science and Criminal Justice. Dr. Welch has been a friend of the Criminal Justice Program for a long time and was previously the Department Head of Political Science and Criminal Justice. We are excited to have him back in that position, and we look forward to his leadership and working with him. There is also a new Dean for the Terry B. Rogers College of Education and Social Sciences. Dr. Eddie Henderson stepped down as Dean of the College after serving for almost 20 years, and Dr. Gary Bigham, from the Department of Education, will soon be appointed as the new Dean for our College. We are sad to see Dr. Henderson go but are excited to see the new leadership of Dr. Bigham.

Faculty News and Accomplishments

The individual faculty in Criminal Justice kept busy during the academic year! Dr. Kim continues to be a publishing machine! She recently published two peer-reviewed journal articles—*Religion and Misconduct Among Prison Inmates in South Korea* and *Factors of Fear of Crime Among Korean Citizens: The Mediating Effect of Confidence in the Police*—and has other articles under review. Dr. Kim also taught new courses for the Program and is preparing the *Social Research* course in the Fall.

Dr. Denney kept busy getting acclimated to the University and the Program. Moving to a new place and adapting to a new university is a lot of work! He taught several courses that were new preps for him, learned about and started advising students, and served on a hiring committee for Social Work. With his first year down, we cannot wait to get Dr. Denney more involved next year!

Professor Jordan has stayed busy teaching five courses a semester and advising many Criminal Justice students. She also is the faculty adviser for the Criminal Justice Association. Professor Jordan also advises new and transfer students for Advising Services. We are glad to have a Criminal Justice faculty member advise new and incoming students so they can get good and correct information!

Professor Arpero had an exceptionally busy year! In addition to teaching five courses and advising students, she planned and executed a “Criminal Justice Forum” where she met with leaders of Criminal Justice agencies in the Panhandle to discuss local criminal justice issues and policies. She

was the main author of a proposal with suggestions for collaboration and research projects with these agencies. Professor Arpero is working hard to establish closer ties between the community, local criminal justice agencies, and the Criminal Justice Program. She just completed and submitted a federal grant proposal with Canyon Police Department concerning using virtual reality to train police officers in de-escalation tactics. She just created a

RECENT SUCCESS

Professor Arpero held a Criminal Justice Forum with many Criminal Justice leaders in the Panhandle



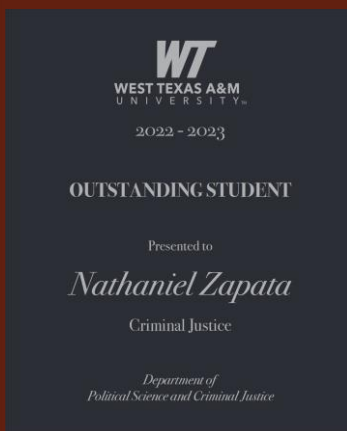
Left to right: Chief Joe Barton, Chief Martin Birkenfeld, Professor Arpero, Sheriff Christopher Forbis, Sheriff Brian Thomas

Criminal Justice recruitment brochure and she has many recruitment efforts for the Criminal Justice Program underway!

WT has managed to keep me busy as well! I continue to serve as a Designated Administrator for Title IX, which has kept me exceptionally busy over the last year with several important cases. I was also recently appointed to serve on Faculty Senate as the Political Science and Criminal Justice representative, which kept me busy considering the recent controversy on campus. However, I did manage to publish an article in the *Justice Policy Journal*, “Fighting in Virginia High Schools: A Multilevel Analysis.” I also submitted a manuscript with my co-author for a Criminal Procedure textbook, which should be in print in the spring. I successfully completed my third-year review for tenure. I did several media interviews with local media, NewsNation, and NPR. I was interviewed for a story about prosecutorial misconduct in Washington State, which you can find [here](#). Lastly, I worked with two excellent McNair Scholars, Allan Baltazar and Maryann Heffley.

RECENT SUCCESS

Nathaniel Zapata was awarded the Outstanding Criminal Justice Student of the Year Award for 2022-2023. Nathaniel is a senior and plans on entering law enforcement upon graduating.



“Professor Arpero is working hard to establish closer ties between the community, local criminal justice agencies, and the Criminal Justice Program.”

Program Accomplishments

Program wide, we had many accomplishments as well! First, we had two very successful McNair Scholars this last year—Allan Baltazar and Maryann Heffley. I was fortunate enough to be the advisor for both through the process. Allan and Maryann were excellent McNair Scholars who completed and presented excellent papers at conferences. Allan was recently accepted to WT’s graduate program in psychology, and Maryann is applying to law school.

We also had a great end-of-the-year award and scholarship ceremony with the Political Science Program. We awarded scholarships to many excellent Criminal Justice undergraduate students and presented the well-deserved Criminal Justice Student of the Year Award to Nathaniel Zapata.

We also think it is important to keep in contact with former Criminal Justice faculty at WT. We realize that we stand on the shoulders of giants—such as Brent Lynch, Dick Jackson, Claudia Stuart, and Susan Coleman—and are indebted to them for the Criminal Justice Program we have today! I recently met with [Emeritus Professor Dick Jackson](#), the Director of the Criminal Justice Program from approximately 1980-1998. I learned about the founding of the Criminal Justice Program in 1975 by Brent Lynch and other fascinating historical details. I have plans to meet with other former faculty and put together a short history of the Criminal Justice Program on our website.

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We hope all of you enjoy the rest of the Summer! We look forward to seeing you in August! If you still need to register and get Greenlighted, please get in touch with your advisor or me, and we can help you. Let’s hope for a fantastic Fall of 2023, continued progress in our Criminal Justice Program, and an excellent semester for all of you!

Best,



Brandon L. Bang, Ph.D.
Director, Criminal Justice Program

Former Political Science & Criminal Justice Faculty



*Backrow Center: Emeritus Professor
Susan Coleman (1982 – 2015)*

*Front Row Left: Emeritus Professor Dick
Jackson (1966 – 1998)*