

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER, FALL 2020

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RECENT SUCCESS

In the Fall of 2020, we welcomed a new Instructor, Jeanette Arpero, to our program. Professor Arpero is already making significant improvements to our program. We are excited to have her experience, ideas, and knowledge benefit our program.

We are also welcoming a new adjunct professor, Gordon Eatley, in the Spring of 2021. Professor Eatley will be teaching our *Criminal Investigations* class. As a current Sergeant with the Amarillo Police Department, he brings great experience and expertise to our program.



GREETINGS CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

I hope you are having a great break, a good New Year and that you and your family are staying safe and healthy. It is no doubt a well-deserved break for all of us. With the global pandemic, it was a tough semester for students, faculty, and academia as a whole. However, we all persevered, and we made it. I know that I've never had a semester where so many students contacted me about a death in the family, which is quite heartbreaking and unfortunate. Our condolences go out to all of you who have lost a loved one or a friend.

Additionally, I've never had a semester with so many students who are sick. We had faculty members in CJ with deaths in the family and illnesses as well. I didn't manage to escape these either. My Uncle died in November, and I had personal health issues also. We appreciate all of you for being understanding and patient during this difficult time. It is no doubt unprecedented, but we are giving it our best, and we are all making it through. We hope for a much better and brighter 2021.

Fall 2020, News and Happenings Around the Program

The Criminal Justice Program continues to grow, which is exciting to see. As a whole, academia is seeing declines in enrollment. However, over the last few semesters, we have seen increases in enrollment in our Criminal Justice Program. The exact number is difficult to know because it is continually changing, but we have almost 250 undergraduate Criminal Justice Students to the best of my knowledge.

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Also, this Fall, Dr. Harry Hueston announced his retirement from WT. Dr. Hueston has been a staple in our program for years, and we are fortunate we had him here for so long. Dr. Hueston will officially retire on January 15, 2021. The College of Education and Social Sciences held a reception for Dr. Hueston this past Fall to thank him for his dedication and service to the University and Department. We will miss him and wish him luck in retirement!

With Dr. Hueston retiring, we have already opened up a search for a new tenure-track faculty member with a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice. We have received applications for this position, and I'm confident we will find a new faculty member to bring diverse ideas and knowledge to our program. We will have a new tenure-track faculty member hired in the Spring, and they should start in the Fall of 2021. We will be happy to have them and welcome them into our program.

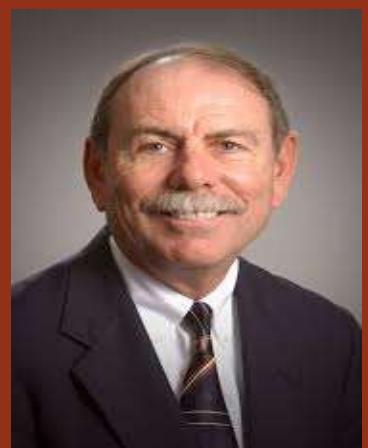
We would like to see more continuity and consistency among our Criminal Justice faculty. Continuity in faculty is easier for the students and better for our program. In the Fall of 2020, we welcomed a new instructor into our program—Jeanette Arpero. Professor Arpero received her MA in Criminal Justice from WT in the Fall of 2019 and has valuable Criminal Justice experience. We are excited to have Professor Arpero in our program, and we hope she stays with us for a long time. Professor Arpero values academics, social science, and academic writing, and we know her firm belief in the power of education will be an asset to our program.

With Dr. Hueston retiring, we are also welcoming a new adjunct faculty member into our program for the Spring of 2021—Gordon Eatley. We are excited to have Professor Eatley teaching our *Advanced Criminal Investigations* class, CRIJ 3322-01. Professor Eatley is a Sergeant and veteran of the Amarillo Police Department. He received his MA in Criminal Justice from WT in the Fall of 2020. Professor Eatley has extensive training in Criminal Investigations, and he brings much experience and expertise to our program. We are excited to have him, and we hope to have him continue to teach adjunct courses for us in the future.

We have also increased our relationship with the Political Science Program. We are the Department of Political Science and Criminal justice, so we think it is essential to work closely with our other half for the mutual benefit of Criminal Justice and Political Science students. Political Science cross-listed two more courses with Criminal Justice—*Constitutional Rights of the Accused* and *Criminal Law*—so our Criminal Justice students will now be exposed to the diverse opinions and influence of the Political Science students more, which will undoubtedly be to our benefit. I'm excited to have more Political Science students in both of those courses, and I

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look forward to teaching them. Furthermore, Dr. Laura Bell, Assistant Professor of Political Science, has agreed to start teaching our *Terrorism* course and will cross-list that course with Political Science. Dr. Bell is a terrorism expert and has written several books and articles on the subject. We are excited to bring her expertise in the area of terrorism to our Criminal Justice students and for her academic approach to the study of terrorism.

“We have...increased our relationship with the Political Science Program.”

Furthermore, we are working with Political Science and the Emergency Management Programs to improve our graduate program. With all three programs working in conjunction with each other, we are confident that we can produce a Graduate level degree that students and faculty can be proud of. Additionally, we will be able to provide

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The Criminal justice Program, in conjunction with Political Science and Emergency Management, is working on implementing a new MA Degree in Public Administration, with a track in Criminal Justice.

a degree to benefit students in all three programs. To accomplish this, we are working on bringing in an MPA degree (Master of Public Administration). This degree will have several different tracks, but one of those tracks will be in Criminal Justice. This is still preliminary and must be approved at several different levels, but this is our hope for the future, and we know this will be for the betterment of our program and students.

Fall 2020, Faculty News and Accomplishments

The individual faculty in Criminal Justice have kept themselves busy and productive during the Fall as well! We were happy to welcome back Dr. Keith Price this Fall from his semester-long faculty leave. Dr. Price completed his manuscript on Prisons in Texas and is now sending his work to potential publishers. We look forward to seeing the final version of his work!

Dawn Marie Jordan has stayed busy teaching five courses and advising a lot of students. In between her teaching and advising, Professor Jordan has joined Title IX as an Adviser to students who go through the Title IX process. I've been involved in Title IX for 2-years now, and we are excited

to have Professor Jordan on the Title IX team!

The Fall of 2020 was Professor Arpero's first semester as a full-time faculty member, so she stayed diligent, creating and keeping up on her five courses, which is no small feat. Professor Arpero started a number of her courses from scratch this semester, which is tough work! We recognize the challenging position we put her in and appreciate her steadfastness and dedication to teaching her classes and ensuring strong academic standards in our program.

As the Undergraduate and Graduate Director of our Program, I've kept myself busy and productive as well. Above teaching my four courses and advising many students, I've managed to accomplish a few things for our program. We reworked how we assign advisees. I noticed that a few faculty members were advising the bulk of advisees,

so we are now allocating advisees via the student's last name. Remember, this is just for new students, so if you already have an adviser, you don't need to worry about anything. Additionally, Dr. Hueston will continue to advise students until his retirement. After that, we will reassign his advisees, so I'll be in contact about that. However, you can find the current distribution on the page below.

If you don't know who your adviser is, you are always welcome to email me, and I'll help you out. I've also worked on streamlining and making the Peace Officer Exemption clearer and more straightforward for me, the students using the Peace Office Exemption, and the Registrar's office. For those of you involved in the Exemption, please email me if you have not received the new instructions and information.

"We have recent graduates...employed by the Lubbock Police Department, the Amarillo Police Department, Dallas Police Department, DPS, a Texas Game Warden..."

For the tenure-track faculty members, publishing is also essential. I managed to write and publish an article titled *Community policing: Please don't throw the baby out with the bathwater* for an edited book. This chapter is about community policing and its efficacy at improving police-community relations. I've also continued to serve as a Designated Administrator and Adviser for Title IX. Lastly, I'm also currently serving as a member of the Potter

County Indigent Defense Commission. After a scathing report published by the Sixth Amendment Center about the state of indigent defense in Potter County, many judges, attorneys, and county officials have been put on a committee to improve indigent defense. I've been happy to serve on the committee over the last year and look forward to continuing to help improve indigent defense in Potter County.

Advising

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Fall 2020, Program Accomplishments

Program wide we have graduated a number of undergraduate students, three Master's students, and we have several students who have landed fantastic careers in Criminal Justice and other related fields. We have recent graduates hired and employed by the Lubbock Police Department, Amarillo Police Department, the Dallas Police Department, DPS, a Texas Game Warden, and many other fantastic and exciting positions. Additionally, we have a former CJ undergraduate student, who graduated from WT a few years ago, accepted into a Criminal Justice Ph.D. program. I was pleased to write a letter of recommendation for this student to get into the Ph.D. program. I've been in contact with this student and some faculty that I know at the institution, and I'm happy to report the student is

excelling and doing well! We are pleased to have one of our graduates entering academia and excelling in a Ph.D. program. We hope that is the first of many to come!

Future

Finally, although we have accomplished much, there is still more work to be done, and we have high hopes for the future. First, we hope to utilize social media and our Facebook page more. If you haven't liked our Facebook page, please do so soon! We want to start highlighting current students, especially online students, to learn more about you and who you are. Also, we'd like to do interviews and highlights of the faculty. This could be about a serious academic topic, but I'd like to see some more fun and lighthearted as well. We also want to use our social media more to announce class cancellations, important due dates for classes, reminders, as well as important Criminal Justice news and developments in the United States.

Second, our curriculum and required courses have not been changed and updated for some time. The criminal justice faculty will work together to update our curriculum and requirements and ensure they are up to standard with similar Criminal Justice Programs. Any changes that might be needed likely won't influence any of you, but it will affect future students and ensure that they have the latest knowledge and courses in criminal justice available to them.

Third, the internship is still on hiatus for the Spring of 2021 semester. However, we hope to bring the internship back soon, when the COVID-19 numbers are lower, when more institutions are accepting interns, and when we are confident we can ensure the interns' health and safety.

I hope all of you enjoy the rest of the winter break, and we look forward to seeing you in January. Happy new year to all of you. Let's hope for a happier and healthier 2021, 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

Recent Success

A recent graduate from our Criminal Justice Program was accepted and is excelling in a highly regarded Criminal Justice Ph.D. program. We hope to start placing more students in well-respected graduate programs!