The latest edition of the Pirate’s Plank shares 2019-2020 news and activities with the criminal justice community, alumni, and friends of the Department of Criminal Justice at East Carolina University. We invite you to keep up with departmental happenings by visiting our website at https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/ or Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If you haven’t signed up, please do so today! Of course, always feel free to contact us through the website JUST Connect link, email JUST@ecu.edu, or telephone (252) 328-4192 if there is a question, need for more information, or news to pass along. We appreciate your help in staying connected with alumni, friends, and the Pirate nation by sending information on contact updates, newsworthy events, or new subscribers to Jenna Smith at JUST@ecu.edu or peadenje@ecu.edu. And if you are criminal justice alumni, please send us a brief testimonial statement about how the ECU criminal justice education prepared you for professional success.

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It would be an understatement to say that the 2019-2020 academic year has been extraordinary in many ways. Both the Pirate Nation and campus community were impacted by Hurricane Dorian in September 2019 and the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic beginning in March 2020. While these events disrupted campus operations and student life, ECU has responded by implementing health-centered safeguards and modifications to ensure that faculty, staff, and students are protected, and we can fulfill our educational mission. Although many of these adjustments were unfamiliar, departmental employees and students demonstrated remarkable resilience and we have maintained our commitment to educate the next generation of criminal justice leaders. Despite these distractions, we navigated through another successful year and are proud of the numerous accomplishments of our faculty and students. Furthermore, the department continues to grow and advance in teaching innovation, curriculum development, new programming, impactful research, and meaningful service. Many of these activities are described in this edition of the Pirate’s Plank.

The department will have a leadership change in 2020-2021 as I step down as Chair in August 2020 to join the full-time faculty. After more than ten years as Department Chair, the time has come for me to return to my responsibilities as a professor. When I arrived at ECU in 2010, I was impressed by the passion for criminal justice study exhibited by the faculty and students and convinced that the department had tremendous potential for growth and success. Indeed, the last ten years have confirmed my belief as the department has consistently advanced in many areas. I am proud of these achievements and attribute them to the collective efforts of the talented faculty, staff, and students coupled with the support of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, agency partners, and alumni. I am grateful for their encouragement and support in helping me lead the department forward. The department has a bright future and I am delighted to remain a part of it in the years to come.

It continues to be a privilege to work with exceptional faculty, staff, students, advisory board, alumni, and supporters. My sincere thanks to them for their effort and support of our educational mission at East Carolina University. I do hope that you will enjoy catching up on the many exciting departmental activities in this edition of the Pirate’s Plank.

2019-2020 Highlights

- Dr. Heidi S. Bonner named new Department Chair
- New Criminal Law & Legal Process Minor offered in 2020
- CJ Living-Learning Community student program launched
- Department to host Fulbright Visiting Scholar in 2021
- International student internships add to global engagement
- Four new faculty join the Department
- Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award given
Bonner takes Helm as Department Chair

Dr. Heidi S. Bonner has been appointed to succeed Dr. William Bloss as Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice beginning in August 2020. She joined the department faculty in 2012 and currently holds the position of tenured Associate Professor of Criminal Justice. Professor Bonner previously served as departmental Graduate Program Director and Undergraduate Program Director along with other key leadership positions. She earned a PhD/MA in Criminal Justice at the State University of New York-Albany (SUNY); MS in Justice Studies at San Jose State University, and BA in Criminal Justice/Political Science at Gustavus Adolphus College degrees. Dr. Bonner’s research centers on law enforcement policy and practice and domestic violence issues. She has received several recognitions for her work as a teacher and scholar to include being awarded multiple external research grants to study law enforcement intervention in domestic violence incidents.

Hurricane Dorian and COVID-19 Challenge Campus Operations

With Hurricane Dorian’s arrival in Eastern North Carolina in September 2019, it was clear that the academic year was in store for unexpected disruptions in normal operations. The storm effects caused temporary campus office closures, class cancellations, and modifications to the semester calendar and course instruction. But the worst was yet to come when the COVID-19 pandemic forced university leaders to extend the 2020 Spring break in March 2020 then soon convert all campus instruction to online delivery and employees to teleworking. Further changes would be implemented as the new normal became a complete transition to virtual operations and events. These adaptations were intended to ensure the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Despite the disruption, the campus community effectively adapted to the virtual environment and the semester wrapped up on schedule.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts 2020-2021 Academic Year

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, East Carolina University has implemented widespread modifications to the academic year schedule and activities. As described in the Return of Pirate Nation guidelines for campus safety policies (see https://returnofpiratenation.ecu.edu/), substantial adaptations to operational, instructional, and campus life will be put in place beginning in the Fall 2020 semester. As with the onset of the COVID-19 situation, departmental leaders, faculty, and staff have maintained their commitment to providing high-quality
instruction focused on student success. The changes will remain throughout 2020-2021 with an added emphasis on personal safety, social distancing, and sanitizing protocols campus wide.

**New Criminal Law and Legal Process Minor Offered in 2020**

Beginning in 2020-2021, a new minor in Criminal Law and Legal Process will be offered. The 21 semester-hour minor program focuses on criminal law, criminal procedure, the judiciary and court process, and critical reasoning. The minor is a natural complement to the criminal justice major, particularly for those students preparing for law school, but would also benefit students in related fields such as history, philosophy, political science, and sociology.


**CJ Living-Learning Community Program Launched in Fall 2019**

The Criminal Justice Living-Learning Community (CJLLC) program was launched in the 2019-2020 academic year with 20 first-year/transfer criminal justice majors being selected for the inaugural cohort. These students were supported by the CJLLC faculty/staff team that consisted of faculty Drs. William Bloss, Heidi Bonner, and Scott Walfield, academic advisors Peggy Newsome and Courtney Rosemond, and staff Jenna Smith. Together, they organized a variety of academic, co-curricular, field trip, and social activities for student participants. These included a field trip to the Raleigh Police Department and Wake County CCBI crime laboratory coupled with talks by criminal justice professionals from law enforcement, corrections, law, and more. All ECU first-year freshman/transfer criminal justice major students are eligible to apply to the program. Applicants are selected through a competitive process and each year the cohort is limited to 20 students who are chosen through a CJLLC team-led evaluation process. There is no cost for students to participate in the CJLLC program and the multi-faceted aim is to facilitate student transition to university life, retention, academic success, and familiarity with the criminal justice field of study. Planning is underway for the 2021-2022 CJLLC cohort since the 2020-2021 program has been suspended due to the COVID pandemic. More information can be found at [https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/living-learning-community/](https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/living-learning-community/).
Department to Host Fulbright Visiting Scholar in 2021

Dr. Christiaan Bezuidenhout, Professor of Criminology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa has been selected as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar to conduct policing research in the United States. He will be hosted by the Department of Criminal Justice from January 1-September 30, 2021 and we are honored to be chosen as his U.S. resident university. Although Professor Bezuidenhout briefly visited ECU in 2018 to discuss inter-institutional partnerships, his return as a Fulbright Scholar will give our faculty and students the chance to work with a prominent international criminologist and researcher. We look forward to welcoming Professor Bezuidenhout to the department.

Douglas Named Mock Trial Association Advisor

Heather Douglas joined the department faculty in 2019 as a Teaching Instructor specializing in criminal law, criminal procedure, and court courses. Mrs. Douglas holds JD and LLM law degrees, and as a former criminal prosecutor, is the principal instructor in the new Criminal Law and Legal Process minor and has been named the academic advisor for the East Carolina University Mock Trial Association. Mrs. Douglas will be responsible for coordinating mock trial association activities and mentoring students interested in legal careers and trial advocacy exercises. For more information contact Mrs. Heather Douglas at douglash18@ecu.edu.

PROGRAM NEWS

Master’s Degree Moves Up in National Rankings

Once again, the ECU Master of Science in Criminal Justice program was ranked by US News & World Report among the best in the country. The 2020 Best Online Graduate Criminal Justice Program report placed us at 16th nationally and 1st in North Carolina. This continues a multi-year pattern of listing our program in the top 20 in the nation and puts it alongside the leading criminal justice graduate programs in the U.S. The U.S. News & World Report annual ranking is considered the most prestigious in the industry and our 2020 placement moved up one position from 2019. The recognition provides further evidence of our commitment to academic excellence and best value in criminal justice graduate study. The ECU criminal justice online graduate program is open to all qualified applicants and offers post-baccalaureate education options for students interested in career advancement, criminal justice education vocations, or preparation for doctoral study. The ECU News Service feature story can
be found at https://news.ecu.edu/2020/01/14/nationally-ranked/. For more program information visit https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/ or contact us at MSCJ@ecu.edu or Dr. Michele Stacey, Graduate Program Director staceym@ecu.edu.

International Student Internships a First

For the first time undergraduate students completed their semester-long field experience internship in organizations outside of the U.S. Three criminal justice students have fulfilled their internship requirement in Dublin, Ireland and Banjul, Ghana with law, juvenile, and justice advocacy agencies. As pictured, criminal justice major Aji Njie (right) joins an attorney in a Ghanaian courtroom for criminal proceedings. It has been a departmental goal to include international internships among the global criminal justice engagement activities offered to ECU students. This field experience opportunity complements our European study broad, foreign student exchange, international visiting scholar, inter-university collaboration, and faculty transnational research programs already in place. All BS in Criminal Justice majors are required to complete a nine-semester hour field experience internship course in the final semester before graduation. The course is offered fall, spring, and summer with annual internship placements over 175 students in criminal justice-related agencies.

2020 CJ Career Fair Tops Previous Years

Over the past nine years the ECU Criminal Justice Career Fair has become an annual tradition. The 2020 event held on March 5th eclipsed previous years with 40 federal, state, and local criminal justice agencies and three North Carolina law schools participating. Agency representatives met with over 500 criminal justice and university students in the new ECU Main Student Center to discuss criminal justice career options and employment opportunities. Again, this year recruiters commented on the high-quality applicants that graduate from ECU programs and praised the Criminal Justice Career Fair for its emphasis on the justice professions. The Fair is no cost to agency or student participants and is open to the ECU community. It offers a “one stop shop” opportunity for students to explore criminal justice jobs across the professional spectrum. For more information visit our Facebook, webpage https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/, or contact us at JUST@ecu.edu 252.328.4192.
Four New Faculty Join the Department

Steven L. Brewer, Jr., PhD: Assistant Professor
Dr. Steven Brewer earned a PhD and MA in Criminology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and BS from Lock Haven University. He previously held a faculty appointment at Penn State University. Professor Brewer’s teaching interests include criminological theory, juvenile delinquency, research methodology, and statistical analysis. His research focuses on serial and mass murder, school violence, and large data analysis.

Heather M. Douglas, JD, LLM: Teaching Instructor
Mrs. Heather Douglas earned the law degrees LLM from California Southern University and Juris Doctor (JD) from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a BS from Southwest Baptist University. She has prior experience as a criminal prosecutor and law school and university faculty member. Her teaching specialization focuses on law-related courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels to include criminal law, criminal procedure, courts, and judicial process. Mrs. Douglas is also the faculty advisor for the ECU Mock Trial Association.

James “Kirk” Miller, PhD: Associate Professor
Dr. Kirk Miller earned a PhD and MS in Sociology from North Carolina State University with a concentration in Criminology and BS/BA from Virginia Tech University. He previously held administrator and faculty appointments at Northern Illinois University. Professor Miller’s teaching interests include criminal justice theory, diversity in criminal justice, and research design. His research focuses on police decision-making, race/gender in the justice system, and mass public shootings.
Dr. Sara Bryson earned a PhD in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Florida, MA in Criminal Justice/Criminology from Sam Houston State University, and BS from Texas A&M University. Her teaching interests include juvenile justice, criminology, and research methods. Professor Bryson’s research centers on juvenile justice and delinquency, school victimization, and race/ethnicity issues.

We welcome these new faculty colleagues!

Jones Receives the 2020 Faculty Impact Award

Professor Mark Jones is the recipient of the East Carolina University Careers Services Office 2020 Faculty Impact Award. He was recognized for his exceptional work as the departmental Director of the Field Experience and Internship program. His responsibilities include program oversight, departmental liaison with placement organizations, and graduate and undergraduate internship course instructor. For a decade, Dr. Jones has instructed and guided over 1,500 internship students and has been instrumental in developing affiliation agreements with hundreds of sponsoring agencies and organizations to include domestic and international placements in Europe and Africa.

ADVISORY BOARD NEWS

Board Bestows Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award

At the October 25, 2019 Board meeting, the joint Department of Criminal Justice and Criminal Justice Advisory Board Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award was given posthumously to Mr. Jack Thomas Harrigan (’74). The award was received by his son Neal Harrigan pictured with Mr. Carl Caulk, Chair CJAB (right) and Dr. William Bloss, Chair CJ Department (left). Tom Harrigan was a Marine and Viet Nam veteran who graduated from East Carolina University with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice in 1974. He had a distinguished professional career with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and upon retirement, joined the Carteret Community College criminal justice faculty until his premature death. A Carteret College colleague wrote “Tom Harrigan was a good man, consummate professional, and a credit to the Criminal Justice Department at East Carolina
University.” Nominations are invited for the annual *Distinguished Alumni Award*, and for more information, visit [https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/distinguished-alumni-award/](https://criminal-justice.ecu.edu/distinguished-alumni-award/).

Advisory Board membership consists of distinguished community, educational, and professional leaders from across the justice-related field. Its mission is to provide the Department of Criminal Justice leadership with input to assure that programs are imbued with best practices while effectively preparing students for professional success. Their advice and support play an important role in the department’s success and are greatly appreciated.

**ALUMNI NEWS**

**ECU News Story Features Raleigh PD Leaders**

The East Carolina University News Service published a feature story titled “Meet the three ECU alumni leading the Raleigh Police Department.” Described in the article is the post-graduation professional journey of Raleigh Police Department Chief Cassandra Deck-Brown ’87 (left), Deputy Chief Karen Riggsbee ’88 (center), and Deputy Chief Robert Council ’92 (right). Although each guided their own career, they have the common bond of graduating from ECU with a criminal justice degree that prepared them for professional success. “We’ve known about our connection to ECU but to end up in leadership positions in the department is special. It shows the university gave us a good, positive foundation and that we’ve taken the education there and put it to work,” said Council. Together, these alumni lead the second largest police department in North Carolina with 800 sworn officers and 100 civilian staff. Read the full story at [https://news.ecu.edu/2018/12/03/criminal-justice/](https://news.ecu.edu/2018/12/03/criminal-justice/).

**ALUMNI BEAT**

If you are criminal justice alumni, please send us a brief testimonial statement about how the ECU criminal justice education prepared you for professional success as well as updates and news to Jenna Smith at peadenje@ecu.edu or JUST@ecu.edu.

**$ Give to CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Donors play a vital role in the success of the Department. Gifts support a variety of programs that directly benefit students while helping us fulfill our educational mission. Tax deductible contributions may be made to several funds including departmental programs, student scholarships, and student programs. Individual, matching, corporate, or planned gifts are needed and sincerely appreciated. Please support our students by donating today. For information on
contributing to criminal justice programs contact Dr. Heidi Bonner at bonnerhe@ecu.edu or Jenna Smith at peadenj@ecu.edu.