



Western Association of Criminal Justice

2025 Annual Conference **October 8-10, 2025**



Caesars Republic
Lake Tahoe, NV



Western Association of Criminal Justice

2025
Conference Program

“Data-Driven Decision Making: How Social Science Research Can Inform Criminal Justice Practice”

Caesars Republic
Lake Tahoe, NV
October 8-10, 2025

WACJ on the Web at www.wacj.org



Western Association of Criminal Justice

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Friday AM Break Sponsor



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1990-1991	Karl Hutchinson	Sacramento City College
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1979-1980	Bill Melnicoe	California State University-Sacramento
1976-1979	Karl Hutchinson	Ft. Steilacoom Community College



Western Association of Criminal Justice

History

The Western Association of Criminal Justice (WACJ) was organized in March 1977 (under the name Western and Pacific Association of Criminal Justice Educators) as a result of a decision of its parent organization, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS), to regionalize in order to better serve its members. The official name of the organization was changed at the 2008 annual meeting to increase the range of scholarship beyond educational goals. WACJ is the Region V affiliate of the ACJS. It not only draws members from the states within its own region (Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, the Pacific Territories and Possessions, and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta) but also from all other ACJS regions.

Goals and Services

The WACJ is working to promote communication and dissemination of information among members, other associations of educators, and agencies of the criminal justice system.

The WACJ's aim is to develop standards of quality education and training in the administration of justice.

The WACJ encourages both limited and long-term planning and research in the criminal justice system.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

2025 Program at a Glance

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

3:00pm **WACJ Board meeting and Meeting w/ Hotel**
***WACJ Executive and Full Board members only-**
Meet in hotel lobby at 2:45pm*

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

11:00am-4:30 pm	Registration/Hospitality Desk	Emerald Bay 123
12:30pm	Afternoon Refreshments (Sponsored by: Weber State University)	Emerald Bay 123
1:00pm-1:15pm	Opening Remarks: Kelly Menck, WACJ President	Emerald Bay 123
1:15pm-2:00pm	Event # 1: ROUNDTABLE: WACJ-Future Possibilities	Emerald Bay 123
2:10pm-3:00pm	Event # 2: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Using Research to Inform Criminal Justice Policy	Emerald Bay 123
3:10pm-4:00pm	Event # 3: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Innovations in Justice Research	Emerald Bay 123
4:00pm-5:30pm	Event # 4: Set-up and Judging for Student Poster Competition (only student presenters and judges in the room please)	Pre Function Area 1 & 2
5:30pm	Event # 5: President's Reception (including announcement of the Student Poster Competition results) (Reception sponsored by: Boise State University, Criminal Justice and the School of Public Service & Student poster competition awards sponsored by: Springer and WACJ)	Pre Function Area 1 & 2



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Thursday, October 9, 2025

8:00am-12:00pm	Registration/Hospitality Desk	Emerald Bay 123
8:30am	Morning Refreshments (Sponsored by: Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences)	Emerald Bay 123
9:00am-9:50am	Event # 6: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Incorporating Race and Gender Bias into Criminal Justice Research	Emerald Bay 123
10:00am-10:50am	Event # 7: BOOK PREVIEW: Cutting Life Short	Emerald Bay 123
11:00am-11:15am	Event # 8: ACJS President Remarks	Emerald Bay 123
11:15am	Event # 9: WACJ General Business Meeting **All invited – nominations for Second Vice-President will be taken**	Emerald Bay 123
12:00pm-1:30pm	Event # 10: WACJ Luncheon Guest Speakers: Chief Deputy Jason Walker & Sergeant George Gomez, Washoe County Sheriff's Office (Featured sponsor: The University of Nevada, Reno)	Emerald Bay A
1:30pm-3:30pm	Registration/Hospitality Desk	Emerald Bay 123
1:30pm	Afternoon Refreshments (Sponsored by: University of Wyoming)	Emerald Bay 123
1:30pm-2:20pm	Event # 11: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice	Emerald Bay 123
2:45pm	Event # 12: WACJ Pub Trivia	Emerald Bay 123



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Friday, October 10, 2025

9:30am	Morning Refreshments (Sponsored by: Sam Houston State University)	Emerald Bay 123
10:00am-10:50am	Event # 13: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Teaching, Learning, and Technology in Criminal Justice	Emerald Bay 123
11:00am-12:00pm	Event # 14: WORKSHOP: The Path to Parole for Lifers -- Cognitive Behavioral Programming They Can Actually Learn	Emerald Bay 123
12:00pm	Closing Remarks: Kelly Menck, 2024-2025 WACJ President	Emerald Bay 123



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Wednesday, October 8

11:00am-4:30pm **REGISTRATION/HOSPITALITY DESK** **Emerald Bay 123**

12:30pm **AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS** **Emerald Bay 123**
Sponsored by: Weber State University

1:00pm - 1:15pm **OPENING REMARKS** **Emerald Bay 123**
Kelly Menck, WACJ President

1:15pm-2:00pm **EVENT # 1** **Emerald Bay 123**
ROUNDTABLE: WACJ: Future Possibilities
Moderator: Andrew Giacomazzi, Boise State University

The Western Association of Criminal Justice (WACJ) is one of 5 regional affiliates of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. In this session, the current WACJ Board brainstorms with WACJ participants ideas for future conferences—ways to increase membership and participation, preferences for future conference content, and ideas for other conference models.

2:10pm-3:00pm **EVENT # 2** **Emerald Bay 123**
PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Using Research to Inform Criminal Justice Policy
Cody Jorgensen, Boise State University

Examining the Effect of Permit-less Carry Laws on Violent Crime Rates
Cody Jorgensen, Boise State University

In recent years, many states have loosened regulations regarding carrying a concealed firearm. Permit-less carry laws allow citizens who are legally allowed to own firearms to carry a concealed firearm in public without obtaining a permit. This trend is an evolution of right-to-carry legislation that swept the United States beginning in the late 1980s. Research tends to find that right-to-carry laws increase violent crime. This study examines the effect of permit-less carry laws, independent of right-to-carry laws, on violent crime rates in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, and Wyoming, the first states to adopt permit-less carry legislation, using a 50 state panel data set from years 1995 to 2019. The synthetic control method was employed to find that permit-less carry laws were associated with an increase in aggravated assault in Alaska but generally not associated with variations in violent crime rates in the other states. In sum, moving from right-to-carry to permit-less carry was not found to cause an additional increase in violence on top of existing right-to-carry laws.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Utilizing Behavioral Health Data to Analyze Cost Savings/Financial Impact in a Public Safety Agency

Leslie Taylor, Broward Sheriff's Office

Stacey Ming, Broward Sheriff's Office

Broward Sheriff's Office has established two successful behavioral health programs. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program was developed in early 2010 while the Co-Responder Team program was established with an initial grant funding in 2021 from the Department of Justice COPS Office. This study will take a cost-based approach to assess a CIT and Co-Responder Program's savings to Broward County and to health and justice systems. It will review behavioral health call data from 2022 - 2025 current by highlighting diversions from hospitals and formal criminal processing and show significant cost savings for Broward communities.

3:10pm-4:00pm

EVENT # 3

Emerald Bay 123

PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Innovations in Justice Research

Chair: Jessica Hull, Boise State University

The Use of Spatial Analysis and Community Characteristics to Understand Sexual Violence

Jessica Hull, Boise State University

Ashley Fansher, University of North Dakota

Sara Zedaker, University of Houston-Victoria

This study explores the geographic clustering of sexual assault incidents in a large Midwestern city by analyzing 9 years of police reports alongside U.S. Census tract data. Using geographic analyses methods, the research investigates the relationship between neighborhood characteristics and outcomes in the criminal justice system, including arrests, case submissions to district attorneys, and charges filed. Key findings indicate that socioeconomic factors, such as education levels, unemployment rates, and male population density, significantly predict the spatial distribution and outcomes of reported sexual assaults. Arrests were more likely in cases involving known suspects or current/former romantic partners, while stranger-perpetrated cases showed less progression through the justice system. Spatial analyses revealed clustering in areas with high male density and low education attainment. The study concludes that neighborhood-level factors significantly influence both the occurrence and judicial processing of sexual assaults. The findings enhance our understanding of the spatial dynamics of sexual violence and offer insights into policy development and crime prevention strategies.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Finding Comparable Peers: A Data-Driven Framework for Law Enforcement Agencies in Washington State

Yin Zhang, Center for Interdisciplinary Statistical Education and Research, Washington State University

Wooyoung Kim, Center for Interdisciplinary Statistical Education and Research, Washington State University

Comparing a law enforcement agency to valid peers is essential for evidence-based decision-making. We present a data-driven framework to identify comparable peers among Washington State law enforcement agencies using data from the Washington State Data Exchange for Public Safety (WADEPS). Employing organizational, operational, and contextual factors, the framework identifies empirically grounded peer groups that enhance benchmarking, resource allocation, and performance assessment. Furthermore, one can set the weights to give higher importance to any selected subset of indicators. This framework enables stakeholders to analyze performance, evaluate training, and contextualize use-of-force data, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and improved public safety outcomes.

4:00pm-5:30pm

Event # 4:

Pre Function Area 1 & 2

Set-up and Judging for Student Poster Competition

Only presenting students and judges in the room at this time please.



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EVENT # 5

President's Reception

**(Sponsored by Boise State University, Criminal Justice and
the School of Public Service)**

&

Student Poster Competition Awards

(Sponsored by: Springer and WACJ)

5:30pm

Pre Function Area 1 & 2



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STUDENT POSTERS

Federal Consent Decrees: A Descriptive Analysis

Kody Arnold, University of Nevada, Reno

Tianna Stanley, University of Nevada, Reno

Kaden Evans, University of Nevada, Reno

This poster is a descriptive analysis of Federal Consent Decrees since their inception in 1994. It explains the origins, mechanism, and aims of consent decrees. It examines all of the jurisdictions that were subject to consent decrees by department demographics, geographic locations, nature of problems that needed addressing, and the desired outcomes. Case studies are highlighted to demonstrate the metrics and data collection required by the Federal Government. Finally, the outcomes of departments that completed their decrees are discussed.

Objectivity vs Subjectivity: How Does Evidence Type Affect Judgements of Guilt

Natalie Barretto, University of Nevada, Reno

When attributing guilt judgments, legal actors (e.g., police, jurors) weigh different evidence types—but it is unclear exactly how. There is thus ambiguity regarding which evidence types are most convincing of guilt or innocence. Research suggests that forensic evidence (e.g., DNA, fingerprint) is weighted substantially in assessments of guilt. Consistent with this, participants from our study judged confession evidence, DNA evidence, and video facial identification (VFI) evidence as most indicative of guilt after reading a vignette. Findings reveal misalignments between objective and subjective evaluations of evidence strength, revealing how different evidence types influence suspects being found guilty or innocent.

From Disclosure to Documentation: Evidentiary Practices in Intimate Partner Violence Cases

Sami B. Coleman, University of California, Los Angeles

Cale Fitzgerald, Washington State University

Alaric Holly, California State University, Long Beach

Crawford v. Washington (2004) restricts the use of out-of-court testimonial evidence, increasing the importance of tangible documentation in intimate partner violence (IPV) cases. In Washington state, police officers are not required to collect photographic evidence or establish timelines (RCW 10.99.30), despite research showing such practices support prosecution and improve survivors' perceptions of the legal system. Analyzing 317 police body-worn camera videos using systematic social event modeling revealed significant variation in documentation practices. Our findings suggest a need for statewide policy guidelines to standardize documentation, to strengthen criminal justice responses and case outcomes, and to support survivor autonomy in IPV cases.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Alternative Fingerprint Exemplar Methodology

Nicholas Jensen, Weber State University

Traditional methods for obtaining fingerprint or palm print exemplars for criminal investigations involve ink or digital capture systems. Traditional methods may not be effective with difficult populations such as older people or people who have worked with their hands. Traditional methods may miss important friction ridge detail or may introduce pressure distortion in an attempt to ensure the entire palm is in contact with the paper or digital pad. Photography of friction ridges is a non-invasive alternative to traditional methods. This research is not intended to replace traditional methods, but to provide options to obtain the best possible exemplars.

The Effect of Politician Defendants on Jury Decision Making

Jaydon Mullins, University of Nevada, Reno

Kylie Kulak, University of Nevada, Reno

Monica Miller, University of Nevada, Reno

The conclusion of the first criminal trial of a former United States president has raised questions about the integrity of the criminal justice system. Jurors could be influenced to be lenient toward defendants of their own political affiliation and punitive toward defendants of the opposing affiliation. Alternatively, the inverse effect could be true. Participants ($n = 242$) were presented with a vignette of a criminal court case. The defendant was randomly assigned to be either a democrat, republican, or a nonpartisan politician. The results could indicate potential political intergroup biases that pervade the criminal justice system and require immediate attention.

Examining the Relationship Between School Quality and Incarceration: The School-to-Prison Pipeline in Northern Nevada

Brangelitee Orozco Ayala, University of Nevada, Reno

Disparities in school quality and educational opportunities contribute to school failure, potentially increasing the likelihood of crime and even making it necessary for survival (Pesta, 2018). These disparities, however, are not applied evenly across school districts. Urban schools with greater Black, Hispanic, and poor student populations are more likely to be disadvantaged relative to their suburban counterparts, which is related to punitive responses (rather than restorative responses) to student misbehavior (Ann Payne & Welch, 2010). While studies have shown that adult incarceration may result from structural racism in schools (recognized as the school-to-prison pipeline), the relationship between school suspension in adolescence and later interactions with the criminal justice system remains poorly resolved (Novak, 2019). Further, the relationship between real and perceived disadvantage and dropping out has not been fully explored. A better understanding of this pipeline could lead to policy changes and reduced incarceration rates. This study examines the perceptions and experiences of high school-aged residents in the Reno/Sparks area. It compares them with the perceptions and experiences of



Western Association of Criminal Justice

inmates in the Washoe County Regional Detention Facility (WCRDF). The study employs two different data collection strategies. For the high school-aged youth, data were collected via snowball sampling, wherein respondents were provided with a QR code that led to a Qualtrics survey, which they then shared with their friends. The inmates from the WCRDF completed and returned paper surveys. The data was used to test the interconnections between school discipline and incarceration, and to identify the impact of real and perceived disadvantage on school failure and ultimately the school-to-prison pipeline.

Examining the Doing Gap in Sexual Assault Prevention Education

Haylee Oyler, Weber State University

Sexual assault is a prevalent and deeply troubling issue. In response, programs aiming to provide evidence-based education have been developed and implemented to prevent sexual victimization and offending. Using a mixed method approach, this study examined what barriers or limitations hinder prevention programs from effectively implementing knowledge, otherwise known as the doing gap. Results revealed various barriers facilitators face, including cultural, political, and financial restraints. However, facilitators also recognized successes such as positive social communication, connecting participants to community resources, engaging youth in conversations, and cultivating positive social change in their communities. Implications for practice will be discussed.

Lurking Punitiveness: An Examination of Public Perceptions of Death Penalty Abolition

John Toulouse, University of Nevada, Reno

Emily Berthelot, University of Nevada, Reno

Timothy Griffin, University of Nevada, Reno

Research on the Marshall Hypothesis finds that exposure to death penalty realities reduces support, though some respondents maintain punitive, pro-death-penalty views despite abolitionist arguments. No research has examined the resilience of opposition. We introduce the concept of Lurking Punitiveness—the possibility that self-identified abolitionists may reconsider when faced with a heinous, unquestionably guilty offender. Using cross-sectional survey data, we show that opposition can be as malleable as support, if not more. This is evidenced by some respondents abandoning abolition under extreme conditions. These findings challenge the assumption that declining death penalty support ensures a stable trajectory toward abolition in the United States.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

The Effect of Quality-of-Life Ordinances on Perceptions of Police Legitimacy among Homeless Populations

Katherine Wilson McCoy, University of Central Florida

As of January 2024, an estimated 770,000 Americans were experiencing homelessness, an 18% increase from the previous year (Casey, 2024). In Central Florida alone, nearly 3,000 individuals were identified as homeless during the same period (Homeless Services Continuum of Care, 2024). In response, many legislators and city officials have enacted quality-of-life (QOL) ordinances restricting activities commonly associated with people experiencing homelessness (PEH), such as sleeping in public spaces, public urination, and trespassing. Florida House Bill 1365, for example, prohibits public camping and sleeping on public property without authorization. Critics argue such measures disproportionately target marginalized groups by criminalizing life-sustaining activities. Prior research suggests that repeated interactions with law enforcement, whether positive or negative, can erode trust, often rooted in past negative encounters or perceptions of systemic bias. These dynamics undermine police legitimacy, or the belief that law enforcement exercises its authority fairly, respectfully, and within appropriate bounds. This study investigates how the enforcement of QOL ordinances influences perceptions of police legitimacy among PEH in Central Florida. Data will be drawn from six years of municipal ordinance violation records obtained from the Orange County Clerk of Courts, paired with focus group interviews of PEH receiving services from a local nonprofit day shelter. Quantitative analyses will use regression models to assess potential disparities in enforcement based on race, gender, and arrest location. Qualitative findings will provide in-depth context, illustrating how PEH navigate enforcement encounters. Together, these methods aim to advance understanding of how criminalization policies affect trust in law enforcement among vulnerable populations.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Thursday, October 9

8:00am-12:00pm REGISTRATION/HOSPITALITY DESK Emerald Bay 123

8:30am MORNING REFRESHMENTS Emerald Bay 123

Sponsored by: Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences

9:00am - 9:50am EVENT # 6 Emerald Bay 123

PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Incorporating Race and Gender Bias into Criminal Justice Research

Chair: Alexis Harper, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice-Office of Research and Statistics

Gauging Race as a Factor in Law Enforcement Engagement in Colorado

Alexis Harper, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice-Office of Research and Statistics

Jack Reed, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice-Office of Research and Statistics

Michael Phillips, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice-Office of Research and Statistics

Per SB20-217, the State of Colorado collects law enforcement data on contacts with citizens and use of force as a result of those contacts. This analysis reviews the degree to which contacts, how and when they occur, and the outcomes of those contacts are associated with race. Even after controlling for why citizens are contacted, including participating in unlawful activity, findings indicate Black, Hispanic, and Native American individuals are more likely to be arrested and to have force used against them than White individuals. Evidence-based opportunities to reduce the disproportionate representation of minorities in law enforcement engagements are discussed.

Judicial Performance Evaluations and the Problem of Gender Bias

David Brody, Washington State University

Judicial performance evaluations (JPEs) have been used to inform voters about the performance of judges standing for retention elections for nearly half a century. These evaluations are centered around responses to standardized questionnaires by individuals who have appeared before a judge regarding behavior-based items related to process and demeanor. Despite concerns about JPE being gender biased, and theoretical support for these concerns, minimal research has been conducted. This study examines JPE results across five jurisdictions over multiple election cycles. Results of individual state and pooled mean analysis are presented, and implications for the criminal justice system are discussed.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

10:00am - 10:50am

EVENT # 7

Emerald Bay 123

BOOK PREVIEW: Cutting Life Short

Dan Fetsco, University of Wyoming

Today, one in seven inmates in U.S. prisons are serving a life sentence. However, this was not always the case. *Cutting Life Short* provides an in-depth examination of how the lifer population in Wyoming and America has grown since the mid-1980s. Dan Fetsco, an attorney who has years of experience in the Wyoming criminal justice system, utilizes extensive research and case studies of Wyoming lifers to illustrate the problems with life sentences. The book challenges the narrative that people who have committed murder or other serious crimes should never be released, highlighting data from the public and survivors of violent crimes that indicate support for second chances.

11:00am-11:15am

EVENT # 8

Emerald Bay 123

ACJS President Remarks

Stephanie Mizrahi, Sacramento State University

11:15am

EVENT # 9

Emerald Bay 123

BUSINESS MEETING

Future Directions by WACJ Executive Board

Financial Report by Andrew Giacomazzi, Treasurer

Organization Updates by Marianne Hudson, Secretary

Nominations for Second Vice President

*****ALL INVITED---NOMINATIONS FOR SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT WILL BE
TAKEN*****



Western Association of Criminal Justice

EVENT # 10

WACJ LUNCHEON

12:00pm - 1:30pm, Emerald Bay A

“The Use of Drones in Modern Law Enforcement”

Guest Speakers: Chief Deputy Jason Walker & Sergeant George Gomez, Washoe County Sheriff's Office

This presentation explores the growing role of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in policing and public safety. It examines how drones are used for surveillance, search and rescue, crowd monitoring, accident reconstruction, and tactical operations. The session also addresses legal and ethical considerations, including privacy concerns, Fourth Amendment implications, and community trust. By highlighting both benefits and challenges, the presentation provides a balanced look at how drone technology is shaping the future of law enforcement practices.

Jason Walker is the Chief Deputy of the Operations Division. He has been with the agency for 20 years. He has experience in all three divisions including Special Operations.

Sergeant George Gomez has been with Washoe County Sheriff's Office for over 13 years. He has worked numerous assignments in Detention, Patrol, Detectives and also as a supervisor in those areas as well. Currently, he is the Assistant Director of the Northern Nevada Real Time Intelligence Center (NNRIC). He oversees the Drone Program and is the project manager to the soon to be Real Time Intelligence Center (RTIC) & Drone as First Responder Program (DFR), which they are hoping to launch within eight weeks.

Featured Sponsor: The University of Nevada, Reno



Western Association of Criminal Justice

1:30pm-3:30pm **REGISTRATION/HOSPITALITY DESK** **Emerald Bay 123**

1:30pm **AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS** **Emerald Bay 123**
Sponsored by: University of Wyoming

1:30pm-2:20pm **EVENT # 11** **Emerald Bay 123**
PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice
Chair: Cary Heck, Colorado Adult Probation Department

Building Sustainable Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships: Lessons from a 6-year Collaboration Between the Colorado Adult Probation Department and the University of Wyoming
Cary Heck, Colorado Adult Probation Department
Eric Wodahl, University of Wyoming

In 2019, the Denver Adult Probation Department and the University of Wyoming Department of Criminal Justice & Sociology embarked on a partnership to study drivers of revocations among adult probationers. What began as a short-term project has since evolved into a six-year, in-depth data collection initiative, resulting in a comprehensive dataset capturing individual-level measures of both client and officer behaviors and outcomes. While successful, this partnership has not come without challenges. This presentation seeks to provide guidance for building successful research-practitioner partnerships, by exploring the lessons learned from this ongoing collaboration. Topics discussed include the importance of communication and relationship building, navigating role and value conflicts, and managing unforeseen complexities inherent in a long-term collaborative research.

Final Words: A Content Analysis of Last Statements from Inmates on Texas's Death Row, 1982-2025

Mia Abboud Holbrook, University of Nevada, Reno
Emilee Arias, University of Nevada, Reno
Melissa Jarrell, University of Nevada, Reno
Jasmine Wong-Fortunato, University of Nevada, Reno
Shaun Galen, University of Nevada, Reno

This article analyzes final statements of condemned inmates from Texas's Death Row (n=589), building on research that emerged in 2005. Through content analysis, major themes are identified and categorized, with particular emphasis on statements before and after shifts in Texas policies. In 1996, Texas began allowing relatives and close friends of victims to witness executions. In 2019, Texas restricted public access to only verbal final statements made following execution. Findings suggest themes reflected acceptance or readiness, while others reflected pleas of innocence or injustice, revealing how condemned inmates communicate their final messages within evolving capital punishment practices.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

2:45pm

EVENT # 12

Emerald Bay 123

WACJ Pub Trivia

Moderator: Marianne Hudson, Boise State University

Even though our regular moderator, Andy Giacomazzi, is unable to host this year's event, he has put together a fun, action-packed Pub-style trivia game for us that Marianne Hudson will host! Find your teammates (2-4 per team), name your team, and get ready for some easy—and sometimes challenging—questions related to criminal justice and Lake Tahoe, plus a couple of surprise categories! Join us for this fast-paced trivia competition—unique to WACJ—and see if you can take home the honors as the 2025 WACJ Trivia Champions! [If you miss Andy, he will join you in Philadelphia as the 2026 host of Trivia Night at ACJS.]



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Friday, October 10

9:30am

MORNING REFRESHMENTS

Emerald Bay 123

Sponsored by: Sam Houston State University

10:00am – 10:50am

EVENT # 13

Emerald Bay 123

PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Teaching, Learning, and Technology in Criminal Justice

Chair: Kenneth Christopher, National University

Emerging AI and Autonomous Technologies: Implications for Building Organizational Capacity in Homeland Security

Kenneth Christopher, National University

This paper will offer data and research on trends and developments in AI-driven autonomous technologies and explore the need for homeland security organizations to consider how to position themselves to manage in this environment. What knowledge, skills, abilities and resources will public safety and private security organizations need to leverage the use of AI-driven autonomous technology?

Assessment of Learning Outcomes and an Analysis of Open-Ended Responses for Undergraduate Students Enrolled in Criminal Justice Courses

Sriram Chintakrindi, California State University, Stanislaus

This study evaluates the learning outcomes of college-level students enrolled in criminal justice courses at a public university through a comprehensive assessment of their experiences, knowledge, and skills. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of student assessment data with qualitative analysis of open-ended responses. Quantitative results indicate that students value their criminal justice program, professors, courses, and instructional materials when assessing student learning outcomes. Additionally, students self-evaluated their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Qualitative analysis of open-ended responses revealed themes related to students' perceptions of the course material, including its relevance to real-world applications and the importance of ethical considerations in criminal justice practice.



Western Association of Criminal Justice

11:00am-12:00pm

EVENT # 14

Emerald Bay 123

WORKSHOP: The Path to Parole for Lifers -- Cognitive Behavioral Programming They Can Actually Learn

Christine Morse Fitch, California State University, Sacramento

The Menendez brothers have recently brought the parole hearing process into the public eye, but still, little is known about it. And Lyle and Erik Menendez are not typical "lifers." The sentence, "Life with the possibility of parole" should be called "Life with the small, less than 15% chance of getting released onto parole and not dying in prison." Convincing a parole board that you are "suitable" for parole is very difficult, and relies less on the law and more on what curricula you have engaged in, and on your ability to show that you are using the lessons you have learned. But many people in prison have learning disabilities, low IQ, physical disabilities, mental illnesses, and other issues that can be barriers to learning. Therefore, *how* the information in these self-help courses is presented to people in prison can be the biggest factor in making their "possibility of parole" a real one. "Decision-Making for Success" is the curriculum I designed for incarcerated people with learning challenges, and this presentation will show excerpts from the videos and the workbook, and explain the evidence on which it is based.

12:00pm

CLOSING REMARKS

Emerald Bay 123

Kelly Menck, 2024-2025 WACJ President



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2025 CONFERENCE DIRECTORY

PRESENTERS/COAUTHORS

Emilee Arias
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
emileea@unr.edu

Kody Arnold
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
kodya@unr.edu

Natalie Barretto
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
nataliebarretto11@gmail.com

Emily Berthelot
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
eberthelot@unr.edu

David Brody
Washington State University
PO Box 4011
Pullman, WA 99164-4011
brody@wsu.edu

Sriram Chintakrindi
CSU Stanislaus
Department of Criminal Justice
One University Circle
Turlock, CA 95382
schintakrindi@csustan.edu

Kenneth Christopher
National University
9388 Lightwave Ave
San Diego, CA 92123
kchristopher@nu.edu

Sami B. Coleman
University of California, Los Angeles
330 De Neve Drive, DEN-D415
Los Angeles, CA 90024
sbcoleman27@g.ucla.edu

Kaden Evans
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
katherineevans@unr.edu

Ashley Fansher
University of North Dakota
221 Centennial Dr., Stop 271
Grand Forks, ND 58202
ashley.fansher@und.edu



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Dan Fetsco
University of Wyoming
Department of Criminal Justice & Sociology
1000 E. University Ave., Dept. 3197
Laramie, WY 82071
dfetsco@uwyo.edu

Cale Fitzgerald
Washington State University
PO Box 4011
Pullman, WA 99164-4011
cale.fitzgerald@wsu.edu

Shaun Galen
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
sgalen@judges.org

Andrew Giacomazzi
Boise State University
School of Public Service
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1900
agiacom@boisestate.edu

Timothy Griffin
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
tgriffin@unr.edu

Alexis Harper
Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
Office of Research and Statistics
700 Kipling St., Suite 1000
Lakewood, CO 80215
alexis.harper@state.co.us

Cary Heck
Denver Adult Probation
303 W. Colfax, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80204
cary.heck@judicial.state.co.us

Mia Holbrook
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
miaholbrook@unr.edu

Alaric Holly
California State University, Long Beach
6612 Hespera Way
Citrus Heights, CA 95621

Jessica Hull
Boise State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1955
jessicawells@boisestate.edu

Melissa Jarrell
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
mjarrell@unr.edu

Nicholas Jensen
Weber State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1299 Edvalson Street, Dept. 1206
Ogden, UT 84408-1206
nicholasjensen1@mail.weber.edu



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Cody Jorgensen
Boise State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1955
codyjorgensen@boisestate.edu

Wooyoung Kim
Center for Interdisciplinary Statistical
Education and Research
Washington State University
200 SE Waller Way Mall
Pullman, WA 99164
wooyoung.kim@wsu.edu

Kylie Kulak
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
kkulak@unr.edu

Monica K. Miller
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
mkmiller@unr.edu

Stacey Ming
Broward County Sheriff's Office
2601 W. Broward Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312
stacey_ming@sheriff.org

Christine Morse-Fitch
CSU Sacramento
Division of Criminal Justice
6000 J Street, Alpine 104
Sacramento, CA 95819
christine.morsefitch@csus.edu

Jaydon Mullins
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/M 214
Reno, NV 9557
jaydonm@unr.edu

Brangelitee Orozco Ayala
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
borozco@unr.edu

Haylee Oyler
Weber State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1299 Edvalson Street, Dept. 1206
Ogden, UT 84408-1206
hayleeoyler@mail.weber.edu

Michael Phillips
Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
Office of Research and Statistics
700 Kipling St., Suite 1000
Lakewood, CO 80215
michael.phillips@state.co.us

Jack Reed
Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
Office of Research and Statistics
700 Kipling St., Suite 1000
Lakewood, CO 80215

Tianna Stanley
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
tiannas@unr.edu



Western Association of Criminal Justice

Leslie Taylor
Broward County Sheriff's Office
2601 W. Broward Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312
leslie_taylor@sheriff.org

John Toulouse
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
jtoulouse@unr.edu

Katherine Wilson McCoy
University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL 32817
katherine.wilsonmccoy@ucf.edu

Eric Wodahl
University of Wyoming
Department of Criminal Justice & Sociology
1000 E. University Ave., Dept. 3197
Laramie, WY 82071
ewodahl@uwyo.edu

Jasmine Wong-Fortunado
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
jstarwongfortunado@gmail.com

Sara Zedaker
University of Houston-Victoria
3007 N. Ben Wilson St.
Victoria, TX 77901
zedakers@uhv.edu

Yin Zhang
Center for Interdisciplinary Statistical
Education and Research
Washington State University
200 SE Waller Way Mall
Pullman, WA 99164
yin.zhang@wsu.edu



Western Association of Criminal Justice

WACJ EXECUTIVE/FULL BOARD

Kelly Menck
WACJ President (2024-2025)
Grossmont College
8800 Grossmont College Drive
El Cajon, CA 92020-1799
wacjpresident@gmail.com

Eric Wodahl
WACJ First Vice President
University of Wyoming
Department of Criminal Justice & Sociology
1000 E. University Ave., Dept. 3197
Laramie, WY 82071
wacjfirstvp@gmail.com

Emmanuel Barthe
WACJ Second Vice President
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
AB 601/MS 214
Reno, NV 89557
wacjsecondvp@gmail.com

Marianne Hudson
WACJ Secretary
Boise State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1955
wacjsecretary@gmail.com

Andrew Giacomazzi
WACJ Treasurer
Boise State University
School of Public Service
191 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1900
wacjtreasurer@gmail.com

Shaun Gann
WACJ Past President
Bureau of Justice Statistics
999 N. Capitol St., NE
Washington, DC 20531
shaungann84@gmail.com

Stephanie Mizrahi
WACJ Conference Coordinator-Local
Arrangements
wacjcoordinator@gmail.com

Jessica Hull
WACJ Web Developer
Boise State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1955
wacjwebdeveloper@gmail.com

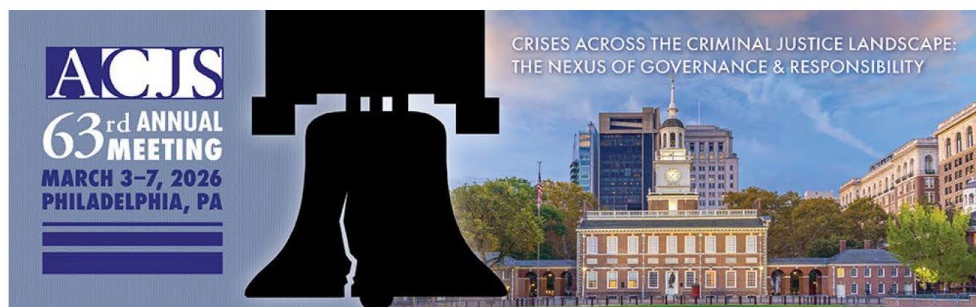
Marianne Hudson
ACJS Region V Trustee
Boise State University
Department of Criminal Justice
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1955
wacjsecretary@gmail.com



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