

Diversity and Inclusion Report

Criminology and Criminal Justice

Structural Changes

During the summer of 2020 the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (SCCJ) and our associated research institutes began working to reaffirm our commitment to anti-racism and more purposefully addressing issues of racial justice throughout our unit.

- Upon starting her appointment as Director of SCCJ, Professor Amy Farrell convened a Racial Justice Committee (RJC). The RJC is chaired by Professor Kevin Drakulich and includes four additional faculty members. In the summer and early fall the RJC outlined a series of broad goals including the promotion of anti-racism across our faculty, staff and students, working toward a more diverse faculty, staff and student body, increasing attention to racial justice throughout the SCCJ curriculum, and supporting accessible and actionable research that advances racial justice.
- During the summer of 2020, members of the SCCJ leadership team held a listening session with graduate students and staff to better understand their experiences and identify concerns relative racial inequality in our community, discipline and unit.

Curricular Review and Planning

During the fall of 2020 the RJC and SCCJ faculty undertook a systematic review of our undergraduate and graduate curriculum. This process included reviewing syllabi to identify learning goals specific to race and racial justice, assignments or weekly topic areas addressing issues of race or racial justice, and readings addressing race and racial justice. In addition to the systematic review of syllabi, we reviewed course descriptions and talked with faculty and students about existing course content. In response to the review, we are undertaking efforts to add a curricular learning goal to our BS, MS, and PhD degrees, and also course learning goals for required courses within the degrees, as well as adding language to the course catalog descriptions that clarifies course attention to issues of racial justice. Our new goal is that students at all levels should be able to explain the role of systemic racism and intersecting dimensions of oppression in the historical development of and current policies and practices in the criminal justice system, as well as in crime and justice theory and research. Additionally, throughout the spring 2021 term the RJC members will work with a team of undergraduate and graduate students to create resources to assist instructors in elevating racial justice throughout their courses. Resources will include sample syllabi and modules, and curated, annotated lists of publications on key race and justice issues that particularly highlight work by scholars of color (a revised disciplinary canon).

Initiatives and Events

During the summer of 2020 the Institute on Race and Justice (IRJ) convened a group of graduate students and staff to develop a statement and action plan relative to IRJ's work on race and justice. This statement identifies three areas of focus—academics, community and practitioners—and includes specific action steps to promote anti-racism and more purposefully address racial injustice in each of these areas through the work of IRJ and the Violence and Justice Research Lab (see: <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/irj/statement->

[on-racial-justice](#)). The statement was discussed and reviewed in partnership with the IRJ community advisory board (CAB). Throughout the fall of 2020, the VJRL has devoted one of the weekly lab meeting sessions to discussing and advancing specific steps identified in the statement, sometimes in collaboration with members of the CAB.

One of the outgrowths of this work was the development of the IRJ dialogue series on race, policing and the community. The dialogue series includes four talks featuring panels of scholars, practitioners and community stakeholders that are being convened throughout the 2020-21 academic year. The first dialogue, “Historical Injustices and Present-Day Policing” was a large success with over 75 individuals in attendance. Dr. Margaret Burnham, University Distinguished Professor of Law and Director of the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, was the inaugural presenter. Dr. Branville G. Bard, Jr., Police Commissioner of the Cambridge Police Department, and Dr. Ted Landsmark, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy, served as distinguished panelists. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Jack McDevitt, Director of the Institute on Race and Justice and Sam Williams of the IRJ Community Advisory Board. The second dialogue “Police and School Police” featured presentations by Lisa Thureau, Executive Director of Strategies for Youth: Connecting Cops with Kids, Lucinda Mills, MSW. District Social Worker at Boston Public Schools, and Roxanne Longoria, Director of Youth Homelessness Initiatives, Mayor’s Office of Health and Human Services. The discussion was moderated by Maddrey Goode, Director of Mass Hire, Boston Career Center.

Two additional dialogue series are planned for spring 2021. Additionally, the IRJ is working collaboratively with the graduate student association to sponsor a talk in the spring term featuring scholars engaged in public criminology. Additionally, the IRJ Schulman lecture series both in past years and this year provides an opportunity to bring top scholars in the field of racial justice to campus. Schulman lecturers engage our students, faculty, and our community partners in important conversations about issues of race, inequality and justice within various aspects of the criminal justice system. Past lecturers have included Ruth Peterson (Ohio State), Rod Brunson (Rutgers, now NU), Nancy Rodriguez (UC Irvine). In 2021, we will utilize the modality of remote engagements to have two Schulman lecturers who are both doing cutting edge research on race, inequality and justice—Jennifer Cobbina (Michigan State University) and Alexis Harris (University of Washington)

SCCJ faculty continue to be engaged in important research on race and justice issues within the context of policing and justice system processes. In addition to ongoing scholarship, faculty have contributed to public conversations about race and justice through a variety of speaking engagements and op-eds. Additionally, faculty are involved numerous system reform efforts. For example, this fall Professor Rod Brunson joined the National Police Foundation (NPF) Council on Policing Reforms and Race that will use research and evidence to guide policing reforms with a focus on addressing racial disparities. Additionally, Professor Jack McDevitt led a team of faculty and doctoral students in work with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety to develop a resource guide on identifying and responding to hate crimes in schools.