

JUSTICE STUDIES DEPARTMENT ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

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This is the first volume of the James Madison University Justice Studies Department Alumni newsletter!

As you're likely aware, the program is 10 years old in 2014, and we felt it was time to begin a more formal method of keeping in touch with our many wonderful graduates. The Newsletter will be published twice a year and will include information about current events in the department, news of our graduates, and resources for the continued study of and involvement with Justice. We invite you to send us information about what you've been doing since graduation and let us know if you'd be willing to have an update on you listed in the newsletter. If there are other things which you would like to have us cover in the newsletter, we also look forward to hearing about that! **Just email Dr. Plass at plassms@jmu.edu**

New Faculty Profiles...

The Justice Studies faculty continues to grow and change. The department now has 12 full time faculty (double the size of the department in 2004 when we opened our doors!). In the past two years, we've said goodbye to Scott Vollum and Jackie Buffington-Vollum, who left us for the University of Minnesota at Duluth to be closer to their families. This year saw the departure of Dr. Will Garriot, who relocated to Drake University this fall. In this same time period, however, we've also been privileged to welcome four new faculty members, and in this issue of the Newsletter, we'll be giving a profile of two of these—Tara Parsons and Ben Meade. In the Spring issue, we'll have a similar report on our other newest faculty members.



Dr. Ben Meade joined us in the Fall of 2012. He teaches in Track A and in the Criminal Justice minor. Dr. Meade has a PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of South Carolina. We hired Dr. Meade when we revised

the curriculum for the Criminal Justice minor—he teaches the Ethics course in that program every semester, providing students with tools to become ethical practitioners in that field. His research interests are in the area of Corrections (a course which he'll teach for the first time in the Spring 2014 semester). His dissertation examined the role and impact of faith and religiosity in prison (or on inmate behavior) and he continues to have intellectual interests in this area. Dr. Meade grew up in Pound, Virginia, so he's familiar with the Shenandoah Valley region. "I really can't imagine being as fulfilled and challenged elsewhere," he says of his new home in Justice Studies.

Alumni Spotlight...

Katie Sensabaugh

Katie Sensabaugh (Spring 2012, double major in Political Science and Justice Studies, Track B) has recently had a unique opportunity to come closer to her Justice Studies roots. When Dr. Garriot left JMU this fall, the department was without sufficient person power to staff the sections of JUST 200 needed to accommodate



our 2013 freshman class. Consequently, all JUST 200 courses in the fall semester were turned into online sections. When we needed part time help with the grading for that class, we were fortunate to find the solution in our own backyard—Katie Sensabaugh! Katie has been responsible for grading short writing assignments and providing support to the 80 students enrolled in 2 online sections of JUST 200 this fall. Her own JUST 200 course was one of her favorite classes that she took at JMU. "Just to be able to work for the department that I graduated from is a pretty nice honor," Katie says.

Katie's work in the Justice fields will continue in the Spring semester, when she relocates to South Africa for a two year program in Justice and Transformation. "I really like this because it combines my political science and my international justice background in a perfect mix," she said. She received a fellowship to cover the costs of her schooling from Rotary International. The scholarship will cover her tuition, living and travel expenses for 2 years. When Katie realized that studying in Africa might be an option for her, she began to search for ways to pay for a second degree. "I started to apply for everything that I could get my hands on and eventually one worked out, which was great. I'll be basically getting a full ride for grad school." Given her interest in the politics and social movements which resulted in the end of apartheid in South Africa, being able to study there is a dream come true. "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity because people who were living during this period of history won't be alive much longer, so now is a great time to hear first-hand experiences from them." After completing her coursework in South Africa, Katie hopes to either continue doing her own research in an academic career or to work for an NGO. Either way, continuing to live or work in Africa is definitely on her agenda for her future!



Dr. Tara Parsons

Tara Parsons also joined our faculty in the Fall 2012 semester. She teaches in Track B of the Justice Studies major. Dr. Parsons hails from the University of Missouri. Her research interests are primarily in the area of comparative politics, with a focus on indigenous movements in political parties in Central and South America. Her dissertation research focused on Bolivia and Ecuador, and the movement from articulating demands to actually

forming political parties among indigenous populations. Her course offerings so far have a focus on international justice--Human Rights, Democratization, and Justice and Development (a new course which she'll offer for the first time in the Spring 2013 semester). "I am really enjoying it at JMU," says Dr. Parsons. "The students have been great and I'm really enjoying the interdisciplinary aspects of the program!"

In Other News...

Dr. Jacob has decided to make a career move and will be teaching and researching issues related to justice in the Indian context at the Azim Premji University in Bangalore.

Dr. Pham left the university to become the Director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Plass has been named the new director of the Nelson Institute for Public and International Affairs, which has become a vehicle for civic engagement projects.

Justice Studies Study Abroad



The past 2 Summers have seen the implementation of two short term study abroad programs designed for Justice Studies students. In the summer of 2012, *Dr. Tammy Castle* (Track A) accompanied a group of students on a journey to the Netherlands and Belgium. As part of the program, students were able to visit the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

In the summer of 2014, Dr. Castle will be the Faculty Member in Residence for JMU's Semester in London Program.



www.jmu.edu/justicestudies

In the Summer of 2013, Dr. Peggy Plass, (Track A) , offered a short term study abroad program in Southern Italy. Students were able to examine the Italian justice system and the phenomenon of organized crime in Italy. During their travel, they participated in an Anti-Mafia march in Sicily (where they were interviewed on Italian television) and visited the former Mafia stronghold of Corleone. Dr. Plass is offering a similar program again for the summer of 2014. "I hadn't intended to do the trip again so soon," she said. "But, we had such a great experience last summer, I wanted to give more students the opportunity to learn about crime and justice in this fabulous context!"

More faculty are likely to sponsor short term study abroad programs in the future.



Dr. Terry Beitzel, in Track B, is currently at work designing a program in South America, with an expected launch of summer 2015



Civic Engagement

Over the past few years Justice Studies students have worked on special projects within the local community, providing them with hands-on experience on the logistics and functioning of local organizations. Participants have worked with the **Child Advocacy Center, Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing (homeless population), Healthy Community, including JMU's Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services, New Bridges, Cultural Diversity at RMH, JMU's Smart Beginnings, Harrisonburg Public Schools, national and local police departments and Second Home.** Practicum in Community Based Research projects have been done with **Our Community Place, Valley Associates for Independent Living, and the Prison Re-entry Council.**

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