



Ohio Council of  
Criminal Justice Education

**24<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Research Conference  
and**

**Awards Ceremony**

**April 6, 2026**

**8:30 am- 3:00 pm**

**Ohio Northern University**

**McIntosh Center**

**Ada, Ohio**

## Agenda for the OCCJE 24th Annual Research Conference and Awards Ceremony

Hosted by Ohio Northern University, April 6, 2026

### Overview:

8:30-9:00 am	Check-in/Registration and Coffee Bar	McIntosh Activities Room
9:00-9:15 am	Welcome and Conference Overview	McIntosh Activities Room
9:30-10:30 am	Oral Presentations Session I	Various Rooms
10:35-11:00 am	Poster Session	McIntosh Activities Room
11:00-11:30 am	Lunch - Pick up lunch in the ONU Dining Hall	McIntosh Activities Room
11:30-12:30 pm	Guest Speaker & Awards Ceremony	McIntosh Activities Room
12:45-1:45 pm	Oral Presentations Session II	Various Rooms
2:00-3:00 pm	OCCJE Executive Committee Meeting	McIntosh Wishing Well

**Special Request:** Please take pictures of the conference throughout the day and send them to John Hazy, (330) 503-4805. When you text these, please identify yourself and anyone in the pictures.

**Technology Note:** Presenters should bring their own laptops, adaptors, presentation clickers, and USB drives containing their presentations.

**Mission:** The Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education (OCCJE) is a 55-year-old non-profit organization comprised of faculty, students, and practitioners who promote education and research in the administration of criminal justice and facilitate communication and cooperation with practitioners on matters of mutual interest concerning education in criminal justice.

### OCCJE Executive Committee for Academic Year 2025-2026

President:	Prof Keith Durkin, Ohio Northern University
First Vice President:	Prof Jessica Swanson, Ohio Northern University
Second Vice President:	Prof Laci Fiala, Hiram College
Secretary:	Prof Kelly VanGilder, Bluffton University
Treasurer:	Prof John Hazy, Youngstown State University
Immediate Past President:	Prof Tristin Kilgallon, LexisNexis

Trustee:	Prof Todd Beitzel, University of Findlay
Trustee:	Prof Brad Potts, Bluffton University
Trustee:	Prof Joseph DeLeeuw, Ohio Northern University

Student Trustee:	Mia Halverson, Lake Erie College
Student Trustee:	Natalie Opritza, Ohio Northern University
Student Trustee:	Grant Batton, Bluffton University

Special Advisor to the Executive Committee:	Dan Ponstingle (Ret), Lakeland Community College
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Editor, Criminal Justice Perspectives:	Prof Keith Durkin, Ohio Northern University
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The Executive Committee of OCCJE would like extend our thanks to Ohio Northern University and the McIntosh Center staff for their hospitality.

## Welcome from OCCJE President Dr. Keith Durkin



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the annual Research Conference of the Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education (OCCJE) being held on the beautiful campus of Ohio Northern University. The cornerstone of the mission of the OCCJE is to promote education and research in the administration of criminal justice. Today we will have the opportunity to hear a variety of research presentations on a vast array of topics including social harms of white-collar crime, the future of forensics, and the reliability of drug-court assessments. Also on the agenda is a Keynote Address from the prominent forensic psychologist Dr. Ronald DeLong and we will gather after lunch to honor our award recipients. I sincerely hope you enjoy your experience today!

## Meet Our Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ronald DeLong



Dr. Ronald DeLong has more than 35 years of experience working with general psychological issues, sexual offenders, and other forensic populations. His services to agencies and courts consist of sexual and criminal offender evaluations, risk assessments, forensic evaluations, and individual and group treatment strategies. He also has consulted for the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC), particularly dealing with sex offender strategies, Internet sex offenders and child pornography. He is a Clinically Certified Criminal Justice Specialist, Certified Sex Offender Treatment Specialist, Fellow with the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) and has several hundred hours of training regarding the treatment and evaluation of sexual offenders. He has a private practice focusing on the evaluation of sexual offenders, violent offenders, general psychological evaluations, fit-for-duty evaluations, and pre-employment evaluations for police officers. He also performs consultation work with law enforcement and other forensic agencies as well as providing education and training. Dr. DeLong is currently an adjunct professor at University of Dayton, and previously at Ohio Northern University for eight years and two years with Indiana Institute of Technology. His published work includes peer-reviewed papers appearing in the Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, the Journal of Sexual Aggression and the edited volume Sex and Gender: Current Clinical Concepts and Practices.

He has taught forensic psychology, psychosexual assessments, counseling techniques, human sexuality, and other psychology and criminal justice courses. He also has published articles regarding Internet Sex Offenders, and currently is completing other publications.

## Conference Schedule

8:30-9:00 am	Check-in/Registration and Coffee Bar	McIntosh Activities Room
9:00-9:15am	Welcome and Conference Overview	McIntosh Activities Room
Welcome Address:	Dr. Stacey Lowery Bretz Dean of The Getty College of Arts & Sciences	
Conference Overview:	Dr. Keith Durkin President of OCCJE	
9:30-10:30 am	Oral Presentations Session I	Various Rooms
	Panel 1: Juvenile Delinquency and Gangs	Wishing Well
	Panel 2: Contemporary Challenges in Justice	McIntosh Boardroom
	Panel 3: Policing Tactics and Issues	McIntosh Activities Room
10:35-11:00 am	Poster Session	McIntosh Activities Room
11:00-11:30 am	Lunch - Pick up lunch in the ONU Dining Hall	McIntosh Activities Room
11:30-12:30 pm	Keynote Speaker & Awards Ceremony	McIntosh Activities Room
Keynote Speaker:	Dr. Ronald DeLong	
Award Ceremony:	Dr. Keith Durkin	
12:45-1:45pm	Oral Presentations Session II	Various Rooms
	Panel 4: Nature of Inquiry	Wishing Well
	Panel 5: Drug Courts, Cannabis Legalization, and Gangs	McIntosh Boardroom
	Panel 6: Public Opinion and Perceptions of Crime	McIntosh Activities Room
	Panel 7: Special Populations, Injustice, and Available Services	McIntosh Room 202
2:00-3:00 pm	OCCJE Executive Committee Meeting	Wishing Well

## Panel 1: Juvenile Delinquency and Gangs

Room: Wishing Well (First Floor)

Panel Chair: Dr. Keith Durkin

### **Juvenile Mental Health Unit: A Juvenile Justice Reform Proposal**

Katherine Hynes and Brianna Riggs, University of Findlay

Youth involved in the U.S. juvenile justice system experience mental health disorders at disproportionately high rates. A meta-analysis found that 70.4% of incarcerated juveniles meet criteria for at least one disorder compared to 9-13% of general-population peers (Development Services Group, Inc., 2017; Teplin et al., 2003; Vincent et al., 2008). About 79% with one disorder also meet criteria for two or more additional disorders (Shufelt & Coccozza, 2006). Disruptive disorders (46.5%), such as conduct disorder, are most common, followed by substance use disorders (46.2%), anxiety disorders (34.4%), and mood disorders (18.3%). Conditions that require immediate crisis intervention, including suicidality and psychosis, are overrepresented issues, with juveniles in detention about 10 times more likely to suffer psychosis than non-justice-involved youth (Fazel et al., 2008). Despite these high needs, facilities often lack timely and accessible care; most fall short of the minimum seven standards of care established by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, and accreditation is not mandated (Desai et al., 2006). In Ohio, the Department of Youth Services agreed in a 2014 settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice to reduce seclusion and ensure individualized treatment, yet gaps in infrastructure and overburdened psychiatric hospitals leave many youth without adequate care. This project proposes the creation of a Juvenile Mental Health Unit (JMHU) within Ohio's state-run juvenile correctional facilities to provide immediate, intensive, and evidence-based interventions. Drawing on peer-reviewed literature, government reports, and current initiatives, it outlines the rationale, implementation strategies, and favorable expected outcomes.

### **Dynamic Feedback and Mediation through Chained Counterfactuals: An Agent-Based Model of Gang Participation**

Dr. Ryan J. Roberts, Youngstown State University

Gang participation among adolescents is frequently linked to delinquency, yet the causal nature of this relationship is confounded by selection effects. Push factors, including family dysfunction, neighborhood disadvantage, academic failure, and victimization, often represent adverse conditions that ostensibly drive youth toward gangs. Pull factors, such as the allure of belonging, protection, status, or economic gains, depict gangs as appealing alternatives. From each explanatory variant, the predisposition to risk factors may lead youths to self-select environments where pull factors are salient, creating a spurious correlation. Despite the many individualized reasons for gang participation, the decision to join a gang (or not) can be reduced to three core feedback mechanisms—average risk factor, weighted set of alternatives, and decision threshold—to capture how initial conditions and choices propagate over time, creating reinforcing or dampening cycles that influence sustained gang participation versus desistance. Chained counterfactuals then decompose these dynamics into direct and indirect (mediated) pathways, providing a generative method to estimate the causal contribution of feedback loops to gang-joining trajectories relative to non-gang paths. This study is being conceptualized to examine the contours of gang participation using agent-based modeling. By chaining counterfactuals, this model aims to yield interpretable mediation estimates.

## **Panel 2: Contemporary Challenges in Justice**

Room: McIntosh Boardroom (Second Floor)

Panel Chair: Dr. Jessica Swanson

### **Sexual Assault on College Campuses: Comparing Large State and Ivy League Institutions**

Kaysea Hartman, Hiram College

Victimology studies indicates that the highest rate of sexual assault occurs for 18-25 years-olds who attend college. The current study assessed the campus features that potentially impact the sexual rate on college campuses, with a focus on 10 sets (n=20) of large geographically paired institutions to compare Ivy League/Private and State Institutions. Institutional data was largely pulled from the universities' Annual Fire and Security Reports, which also often referred to as Clery Act Reports because of the mandate that colleges now have to publish yearly data on crime. Results indicated that the sexual assault rate was slightly higher at the private schools compared to the public schools. While the number of sports teams on campus did not seem to impact the sexual rate, there was a slight impact for Greek life. As the number of fraternities and sororities increased, the sexual assault rates increased slightly. Interestingly, as the percentage of the student body that was male increased, there was a slight increase in the sexual assault rate.

### **Stress and Mental Health: A qualitative study of criminal justice professionals**

Dakarai Jackson, Ohio Northern University

This qualitative study examined the correlation between working in the criminal justice field and a negative impact on mental health. Interviews were conducted with people that have worked and/or are working in this field. This research contributes to the understanding of how this type of work affects the human mind. It can also give a better understanding on if this is an actual epidemic. Understanding the stress of the job can help give us insight on what possible actions can be taken to fix this problem.

### **Invasive Species Management**

Gavin Reineke, Ohio Northern University

Invasive species have been a major ecological and economic challenge in the United States. Invasive species have been known to cause biodiversity loss and habitat degradation. Although studies have extensively explored the ecological and economic impacts of invasive species, there has been little attention paid to the experiences of game wardens. This is because they are central in the prevention and control of invasive species. This study examines the operational, social, and ethical issues game wardens face in enforcing invasive species regulations. According to the journal articles this study found that game wardens face a complex enforcement environment. This is normally met with resistance by the members of that particular community, who see this as an inconvenience and who may not have this information at their disposal or trust their government. There may be a consideration of legal and ethical issues, like the right of inspection of properties, in addition to invasive species management. These findings show that training programs are a necessity that may potentially improve the skills of these officers in communication and conflict resolution. It has also been seen that a combination of ecological science and theory of criminal justice may potentially improve policy implementation, in addition to discretionary policy enforcement. It has also been seen that managing invasive species may potentially benefit from elements of enforcement, education, and community work. This study, keeping in mind that it is based on the experience of game wardens, is a contribution to the understanding of invasive species management.

### **Panel 3: Policing Tactics and Issues**

Room: McIntosh Activities Room (First Floor)

Panel Chair: Natalie Opritza

#### **Tactical Displacement and Police Use of Force During Protests**

Natalie Opritza and Dr. Joseph DeLeeuw, Ohio Northern University

In recent years, police use of "less-than-lethal" tools, including Kinetic Impact Projectiles (KIPs) and disorientation devices, has received increase attention from the media, legislators. This project examines several civil lawsuits and incidents that have contributed to changes in use of force policies. Also examined are the impacts these evolving standards have had on practitioners and the community.

#### **Defunding The Police: Myths & Facts Surrounding This Movement**

Grant Patton, Bluffton University

This presentation examines the discussion surrounding the phrase "defund the police", which gained national popularity following the murder of George Floyd and the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement. The phrase is frequently interpreted in conflicting ways depending on how it is framed by activists, policymakers, and media outlets. This presentation explores the historical development of the Black Lives Matter movement and examines research in racial disparities in police violence. It also analyzes policies commonly associated with calls to defund police departments, focusing on efforts to reallocate funding to alternative public safety strategies. Particular attention is given to mental health services, community-based programs, and other social resources. The goal is to clarify common misconceptions, distinguish between myths and realities surrounding the movement, and contribute to a more informed discussion of contemporary approaches to public safety.

## Poster Session

McIntosh Activities Room (First Floor)

### **Evaluating Wellness Programs for First Responders throughout Ohio: An ARPA Funding Feature**

Dr. John Hazy, Isabella Parsons, Amina Sarwar, Chuck VanDyke, Ed Villone, Todd Werth, and Catrina Wright, Youngstown State University

This poster highlights an ongoing evaluation of wellness programs for first responders throughout Ohio that features ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding. In 2024-2025, 140 police, fire, EMS, and 911/dispatcher agencies received ARPA funding totaling over \$11 million dollars. Individual agencies received anywhere from \$1,500 to \$1,237,00. These first responder agencies who received funding are compared to similar agencies who did not receive funding. Feedback provided from agencies who responded to a survey concerning wellness programs are summarized. Recommendations for those implementing wellness programs for first responders are presented as well as a summary of an annotated bibliography on the subject in order to inform best practices.

### **TV vs. Reality: Examining the Role of the CSI Effect on College Students at Ohio Northern University**

Jamison Hurst, Ohio Northern University

This project focuses on how watching TV crime dramas (*CSI*, specifically) impacts beliefs about forensic evidence among college students. While other research suggests that inflated expectations of forensic evidence after watching crime shows (known as the “CSI effect”) may or may not be a real phenomenon, this research focuses on how this phenomenon specifically affects college students on a shorter-term scale. Thus, the hypothesis was that college students were going to show an increased bias towards forensic evidence after watching an episode of *CSI*, and this is important because it can direct policy changes and reviews of procedures regarding jury selection and pretrial questioning.

### **Victim Blaming: A Study on Public Perception of Sex Trafficked Victims**

Haley Cannon, Ohio Northern University

Sex trafficking is a very prevalent and growing issue in our world today. With such a high number of victims, it is important that we support and not blame them for what they endured. The main focus of this research is to collect data on different factors that may influence an individual to partake in victim blaming of sex trafficked victims. I expect to find a difference in gender with regards to feelings of personal distress and level of blame. I also expect to find split support for victims based on the respondent’s age.

### **Connections among Early Access and Exposure to Social Media with Juvenile Delinquency**

Tiffany Wagaman, Youngstown State University

Social media influences nearly every member of society and it can have significant effects, especially on children. The use of social media at an early age can contribute to future juvenile delinquent acts. The Criminal Justice field needs to understand the influence of media on juveniles to create change and reduce delinquency. This study overviews different peer-reviewed articles that outline the development of adolescence, juvenile risk factors, and the influence of social media. Using a unifying approach, common themes are derived from each article and create a connection between the three topics. The results showed that several risk factors adolescents can experience that contribute to juvenile delinquency are found throughout social media. Whether it is in-person or online, adolescents can be exposed to these risk factors anywhere. Understanding the strong impact of social media can begin research that discovers a solution to how children can be encouraged away from delinquent acts. Creating a connection among juvenile delinquency, adolescent development, and social media use may create a new window for deterrence and rehabilitation. This study overviews prior research that discusses different social process ideas regarding causes of juvenile delinquency that will be used to develop the connection. Several studies are presented that point out the development of adolescents and the diverse ways social media can affect their psychological well-being. While these studies explore different psychological impacts of social media and different potential causes of juvenile delinquency, there is a gap in research that does not directly provide a clear understanding of how social media is a risk factor for delinquency. The primary goal of this study is to use research to reveal connections among access and exposure to social media at an early age with juvenile delinquency and later criminality.

## **The Public Perception of International Terrorism Through Media Exposure**

Claire Wiseman, Ohio Northern University

The purpose of this research was to examine what aspects of international terrorist attacks, communicated through media, play a role in the feelings of threat or concern that is felt by the audience. This project examined if conditions such as how the offender is presented by the media source, more descriptive wording used by the reporters, and the location of the attack, would induce more fearful responses to the terrorist attacks. The goal was to gain a greater understanding of what variables may contribute to the audience's feelings after encountering the coverage of a terrorist event through a news report.

## Panel 4: Nature of Inquiry

Room: Wishing Well (First Floor)

Panel Chair: Prof. Kelley VanGilder

### **Developing Research Skills Through Meta-Analysis: An Undergraduate Perspective**

Charles Yates and Katherine Hynes, University of Findlay

Meta-analysis provides valuable opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in advanced research without the barriers associated with traditional data collection. Conducting Meta-analyses fosters a deeper understanding of research while developing skills in statistical techniques, literature synthesis, and critical evaluation of empirical studies. Rather than relying on individual studies, this approach allows students to identify patterns across multiple independent studies, leading to more comprehensive conclusions. As a student-driven project, meta-analysis presents several advantages. It eliminates the need for primary data collection and Institutional Review Board approval, resulting in a more efficient research timeline. At the same time, it provides meaningful engagement with advanced research skills, including coding study characteristics, calculating and interpreting effect sizes, and addressing variability across studies. These experiences mirror many aspects of professional research, making meta-analysis a valuable tool for developing analytical skills. This presentation reflects on our experience conducting a meta-analysis, with particular attention to the practical benefits and challenges encountered throughout the process. We argue that meta-analysis not only contributes to more comprehensive research, but it also serves as an accessible method for undergraduate students to engage in high-quality research.

### **What Do Juvenile Risk- and -Needs-Assessors Need? An Interim Update**

Katherine Hynes, Brianna Riggs, Charlese Yates, and Dr. Jacob Burmeister, University of Findlay

Juvenile risk and needs assessments (JRNAS) are evidence-based tools used by criminal justice professionals to estimate a youth's likelihood of reoffending and to inform intervention decisions. Although these tools are widely implemented, less is known about how they function in everyday practice. The present study investigated the following question: How do JRNA assessors describe their training, use of discretion, interpretation of results, and challenges in current practice? It is hypothesized that assessors will rate both the usefulness of JRNAS and their confidence in the assessments' accuracy above the midpoint of a 1-5 scale (1 = not at all useful/confident; 5 = extremely useful/confident).

This study involved qualitative, semi-structured interviews with juvenile justice professionals who administer these assessments. These in-depth interviews explored training experience, procedural approaches, interpretation methods, and perceived barriers, which allowed key themes in JRNA practice to emerge. In addition, usefulness and confidence ratings provide quantitative insight into assessors' perspectives.

Because little research documents how these assessments are conducted in everyday practice, the findings provide necessary insight into their real-world implementation. The measures move beyond manuals and guidelines to understand variation in practice and decision making. The results help inform professional training and generate directions for future research in service of supporting rehabilitation efforts and outcomes within the juvenile justice system.

### **Forensics in 2026 and Beyond**

Derek Moore, Bluffton University

Forensics in 2026 and beyond is changing as technology continues to shape the way crimes are committed and investigated. New tools like artificial intelligence and advanced software are helping investigators analyze evidence more quickly and efficiently, especially in cases involving digital data such as smartphones, computers, and online activity. Digital forensics has become increasingly important as cybercrime, social media use, and digital communication grow. At the same time, improvements in DNA testing and trace evidence analysis are making physical evidence more accurate and reliable. While these advancements improve the ability to solve crimes, they also raise concerns about privacy, fairness, and how new technologies should be used in court. As crime becomes more complex and global, forensic science must continue to adapt while maintaining ethical standards and scientific reliability. The future of forensics will rely on balancing innovation with responsibility to ensure justice is served accurately and fairly.

## **Panel 5: Drug Courts, Cannabis Legalization, and Gangs**

Room: McIntosh Boardroom (Second Floor)

Panel Chair: Gabriel Mott

### **Comprehensive Reliability Analysis of the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs in a Rural Ohio Drug Court Sample**

Gabriel Mott and Curtis Ware, Ohio Northern University

The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs (GAIN) is a comprehensive evaluation tool relied upon by many drug courts. Considerable research to date has served to justify the GAIN's validity and reliability. We build upon this research in two ways: First, we perform comprehensive reliability analysis on nearly all established response scales using a novel sample of 231 participants from rural Ohio. Second, we systematically assemble and test over 141,000 theoretical subscales, which are abbreviated versions of the established response scales. Our findings confirm the item reliability of the GAIN for participants in the rural Midwest, and indicate that abbreviated subscales may be developed without loss of item reliability.

### **Criminal Justice and Social Equity Outcomes in Ohio's Cannabis Industry**

Professor Garrett Halydier, Ohio Northern University, Pettit College of Law

Ohio's cannabis legalization statutes intend to provide social equity access to the industry for previously disempowered populations as well as criminal justice relief from the harshest consequences of the War on Drugs. This presentation would review the policies included in the statutes, provide a retrospective on the current outcomes of the policies since implementation, and recommend future changes to improve the effectiveness of the program's criminal justice efforts.

### **Gang Networks and the Threat Multiplier Effect**

Dr. Ryan J. Roberts, Youngstown State University

Non-state violent actors (NSVAs) challenge the state apparatus, with some observers arguing that future wars will be fought against sub-national groups. Gangs are one type of NSVA that has, for the most part, been excluded from this discourse. On the one hand, gang research by criminologists primarily focuses on crime and deterrence. From this perspective, the gang threat is localized with little, if any, attention given to their national security implications. On the other hand, gang research in international studies is either limited to weak and failing states or altogether ignored in favor of insurgent and terrorist groups. From this perspective, enemy combatants are defined in military terms with a focus on NSVAs motivated by state subversion. This paper examines the security implications of gang networks in the United States and the extent to which they challenge law and order, weaken institutions, and undermine the structural integrity of the state. A significant aspect of the evolving security threat landscape is the emergence of gang variations, their ability to operate across unbounded geographic spaces, and their network connections, which act as a threat multiplier.

## **Panel 6: Public Opinion and Perceptions of Crime**

Room: McIntosh Activities Room (First Floor)

Panel Chair: Dr. Jessica Swanson

### **Murder in Songs: How music normalizes crime**

Cadence Lynn, Ohio Northern University

Artists routinely incorporate crime into their music. These songs make their way onto the radio, are available to stream, are featured in movies, or even blasted over the speakers in the grocery store. This project examines a selection of songs and analyzes how music has normalized crime.

### **Perceptions of Vulnerability: Exploring the Role of Gender in Fear of Human Trafficking Victimization**

Abigail Davis, Ohio Northern University

Human Trafficking is a global concern that disproportionately affects women and other vulnerable populations. This project looks into how fearful individuals are of becoming a victim of human trafficking and how this is impacted by gender. This gives policy makers insight into how fearful people are of becoming a victim so that they can create policies to help address this fear.

### **Legislative Shifts and School Safety: Who is this “Good Guy”? Insight from Educator Feedback**

Dr. Jessica Swanson and Dr. Joseph DeLeeuw, Ohio Northern University

The repeal of gun-free school zones in Wyoming, which took effect on July 1, 2025 is the latest in a radical trend to undermine the federal 1990 Gun-Free School Zones Act. This act was signed into law in an effort to reduce violence in educational environments. While research on the effectiveness of gun-free school zones is limited, it is not without controversy. Efforts to repeal gun-free school zones have focused on the “good guy with a gun” argument. This project surveyed teachers in a Wyoming district recently impacted by the change in law. Findings suggest that teachers are not in favor of allowing guns in schools.

## **Panel 7: Special Populations, Injustice, and Available Services**

Room: McIntosh Room 202

Panel Chair: Dr. Keith Durkin

### **Community Action in Practice: An Organizational Analysis of WOCAP**

Sydney Grisier, Bluffton University

This presentation examines the work of West Ohio Community Action Partnership (WOCAP) through the lens of a student internship experience. As a federally designated Community Action Agency serving Allen, Auglaize, and Mercer Counties, WOCAP addresses the causes and conditions of poverty through a wide range of prevention-focused and empowerment-based programs. Drawing on direct observation, participation, and organizational analysis, this presentation explores how WOCAP's mission, values, and service structure translate into day-to-day practice. Key program areas discussed include early childhood education, housing stabilization, energy assistance, financial literacy, parenting education, transportation support, and workforce development. Particular attention is given to how these services work together to reduce barriers, promote self-sufficiency, and support long-term stability for individuals and families. The presentation also reflects WOCAP's collaborative partnerships, funding structure, and governance model, as well as the challenges associated with grant dependency and policy changes. From a social work perspective, this internship experience highlights the importance of strengths-based practice, ethical service delivery, advocacy, and systems-level thinking. Overall, the presentation demonstrates how community action agencies like WOCAP serve as critical practice settings where social work values are actively applied to create meaningful change at both the individual and community levels.

### **The Hidden Injustices of White-Collar Crime**

Juliana Brooks, Bluffton University

White-collar crime is well integrated into the societal fabric of the United States. Its dealings are seen in a wide range of theaters, including boardrooms, doctor offices, financial institutions, courtrooms, and even Capitol Hill. White-collar crime is one of the most lucrative we see, and yet it is only approximately 3% of all federally prosecuted cases annually. White-collar crime has been an active part of our society for centuries, and yet the term was only coined in the twentieth century, less than a hundred years ago. Acknowledging the detrimental practices of white-collar criminals needs to come with acknowledgment of the disparities within our criminal justice system. Our systems are continuously found to be insufficient in getting justice for the millions of victims.

### **OCCJE Evolution within an ASC, ACJS, LEAA, and LEEP Context: More than Alphabet Soup**

Anobel Afriyie, Youngstown State University

This presentation examines the historical evolution of Criminology and Criminal Justice education in the United States, tracing its transformation from early twentieth-century police training initiatives to a fully institutionalized academic discipline. It situates this transformation within the intellectual foundations of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) and the professional and educational framework of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS), which together reflect an intellectual division of labor between theoretical inquiry and applied educational practice. The role and significance of Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP) as the financial backbone to this transformation are similarly underscored. Central to the analysis is the Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education (OCCJE), conceptualized as a state fulcrum that translates national disciplinary developments into institutional collaboration and practice. A decade-by-decade examination highlights OCCJE's progression from a legitimizing consortium to a mature academic network characterized by research integration, student engagement, and digital transformation. Ultimately, it is put forth that the relationship between national and state organizations is symbiotic, with OCCJE operationalizing the intellectual and structural foundations established by ASC and ACJS.

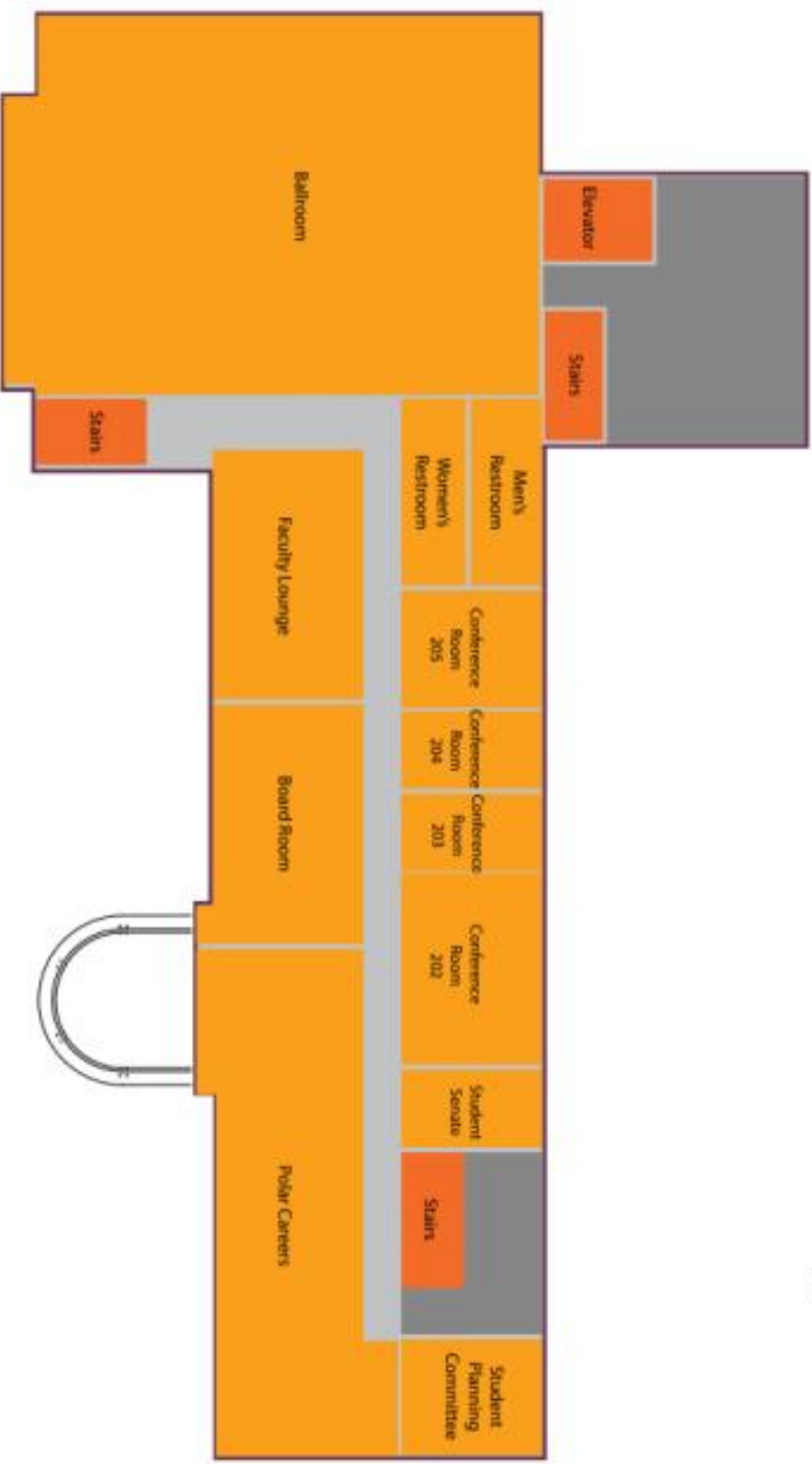
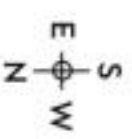
**2026 OCCJE Research Conference Attendees**

Last Name	First Name	University	Panel Number or Attendee
Afriyie	Anobel	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Panel 7
Baker	Jami	Bluffton University	Attendee
Brooks	Juliana	Bluffton University	Presenter – Panel 7
Burmeister	Dr. Jacob	University of Findlay	Presenter – Panel 4
Cannon	Haley	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Poster Session
Constance	Baylee	Bluffton University	Attendee
Cunningham	Natalie	Ashland University	Attendee
Davis	Abigail	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 6
DeLeeuw	Dr. Joseph	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panels 3 and 6
DeLong	Dr. Ronald		Keynote Speaker
Dodson	Micah	Bluffton University	Attendee
Durkin	Dr. Keith	Ohio Northern University	Attendee
Fiala	Cayden	Bluffton University	Attendee
Fiala	Dr. Laci	Hiram College	Attendee
Grisier	Sydney	Bluffton University	Presenter – Panel 7
Halydier	Prof. Garrett	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 5
Hartman	Kaysea	Hiram College	Presenter – Panel 2
Hazy	Dr. John	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Homan	Dr. Herb	Ashland University	Attendee
Howe	Lexi	Ashland University	Attendee
Hurst	Jamison	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Poster Session
Hynes	Katherine	University of Findlay	Presenter – Panels 1 and 4
Jackson	Dakarai	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 2
Lowery Bretz	Dr. Stacey	Ohio Northern University	Attendee
Lynn	Cadence	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 6
Maldonado	Luis	Ashland University	Attendee
Milavec	Ana	Ashland University	Attendee
Moniaci	Anthony	Ashland University	Attendee

Moore	Derek	Bluffton University	Presenter – Panel 4
Mott	Gabriel	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 5
Nolletti	Autumn	Ashland University	Attendee
Opritza	Natalie	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 3
Parsons	Isabella	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Patton	Grant	Bluffton University	Presenter - Panel 3
Ponstingle	Dan	Lakeland Community College	Attendee
Reineke	Gavin	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 2
Riggs	Brianna	University of Findlay	Presenter – Panel 1 and 4
Roberts	Dr. Ryan J.	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Panel 1 and 5
Rosenberger	Jared	Ashland University	Attendee
Sarwar	Amina	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Snyder	Robert	Ashland University	Attendee
Starkey	Saylor	Ashland University	Attendee
Stitzlein	Layne	Ashland University	Attendee
Swanson	Dr. Jessica	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 6
Tenwalde	Pamela	Ohio Northern University	Attendee
VanDyke	Chief Chuck	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
VanGilder	Prof. Kelley	Bluffton University	Attendee
Villone	Commander Ed	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Wagaman	Tiffany	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Ware	Curtis	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Panel 5
Werth	Chief Todd	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
White	Addison	Ashland University	Attendee
Wiseman	Claire	Ohio Northern University	Presenter – Poster Session
Witte	Ainsley	Ashland University	Attendee
Wright	Catrina	Youngstown State University	Presenter – Poster Session
Yates	Charles	University of Findlay	Presenter – Panel 4



# McIntosh Center 1st Floor



# McIntosh Center 2nd Floor



Ohio Council of  
Criminal Justice Education

# OCCJE Student Scholar Program (SSP)

## 1) What is the SSP?

The **Student Scholar Program (SSP)** is a product of the **Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education (OCCJE)**, (<http://www.OCCJE.org>), a non-profit organization that is 55 years old and is dedicated to education that promotes the Criminal Justice system. The SSP is an organization that provides an opportunity for students to enhance their educational experiences and develop professionally.

## 2) Who can join?

Students (first year students through graduate students) with an interest in Criminal Justice education to develop their career and have either:

- an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale **or**
- two worthy letters of recommendation.

\*Note: Students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA or contribute significantly to the SSP as determined by the SSP advisor in order to remain in it.

## 3) Why should students join?

The SSP prepares students for a career in Criminal Justice. By joining and participating in SSP, **students will:**

- a) **strengthen** their resume/portfolio
- b) **apply** and **add to** their schooling experience
- c) **build** a professional network
- d) **interact and communicate** with experts/leaders in the field
- e) **discover** career opportunities
- f) NOT have to pay—**it is FREE** to join!

## 4) How do students join a SSP?

Step 1 is to get a SSP at your school which can be built from scratch, an existing Criminal Justice Club, or an Alpha Phi Sigma chapter. The same advisor for either group can be the advisor for the SSP.

Step 2 is to complete a simple SSP application (available on the [OCCJE website](http://www.OCCJE.org)).

Step 3 is to be vetted by the SSP advisor and be admitted.

Contact John Hazy, OCCJE SSP Coordinator [jmhazy@ysu.edu](mailto:jmhazy@ysu.edu) or 330-503-4805 for more.

# Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education



## Submit Your Research!

**Criminal Justice Perspectives (ISSN #2770-5994)**

The OCCJE peer-reviewed online and print journal is seeking submissions for its upcoming fall and spring issues. Criminal Justice Perspectives publishes research manuscripts, research notes, and book reviews on topics from across the field of criminal justice. Researchers, practitioners, and students are encouraged to submit their work. The journal strives to complete its initial peer-review within four weeks.

To learn more please contact our editor Dr. Keith Durkin [k-durkin@onu.edu](mailto:k-durkin@onu.edu)

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