

Alicia L. Anthony

Legislative Drafting: An Analysis of the New York S.A.F.E. Act

Abstract: On January 14, 2013, the New York State Senate passed Bill 2230, most commonly referred to as the New York Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act (the “S.A.F.E. Act”), to regulate the use, sale, and transfer of firearms by amending multiple New York State laws. Based upon the perception of Governor Andrew Cuomo and Senators Klein and Smith’s swift drafting and enactment of the S.A.F.E. Act, there exists a non-partisan question of whether the S.A.F.E. Act is a legally sound and well-written piece of legislation. By first identifying and discussing the most common and legally accepted canons of law and effective legislative writing, it is determined that the S.A.F.E. Act possesses a majority of the legally accepted canons of law; the criticism of the law is primarily of partisan objection and disagreement of opinion than of actual legal or legislative error.

Faculty mentors: Hon. Salvatore R. Martoche, Dr. Walter Iwanenko, Professor Karl Spencer

Andrew D’Amico

Larceny in the Galleria Mall in Cheektowaga, New York

Abstract: In 2010, there was an estimated “6,185,867 committed larceny-thefts nationwide” (www.fbi.gov, 2010). Larceny is the unlawful taking of property from the rightful owner without purchase or approval. The purpose of this research is to test whether visible forms of guardianship to reduce the frequency or type of larcenies in each store. This project will assist Cheektowaga Police Department in further understanding the dynamics of larceny in the Galleria Mall. A survey has been prepared based on routine activities theory. A survey given to managers of individual stores and the responses will be used to build a dataset. This dataset will be analyzed to test the null hypothesis: Visible forms of guardianship help to reduce the frequency or types of larceny within each store.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Martin Floss, Dr. Kathleen Pierino and John Culhane J.D.

Mary Elizabeth Davis

The Impact of Federal Reentry Court in Reducing Recidivism: A study of the Federal Reentry Court Program in the Western District of New York (WDNY)

Abstract: The Federal Reentry Court (FRC) for the Western District of New York was established in 2011 and aims to reduce recidivism as well as assist offenders in transitioning from prison to meaningful, productive and law-abiding lives back within their communities. The purpose of this quasi-experimental study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Federal Reentry Court in achieving this goal. The experimental group consisted of all offenders who participated in the Federal Court Reentry program from its inception in March 2011 to January 31, 2015. A matched group of offenders, released to the supervision of the WDNY, who did not participate in the program, was used as the control group. Using the Pretrial Services Automated Tracking System (PACTS), data on each subject was collected using 40 variables. Some of the variables included are: age, race, gender, Recidivism Prediction Index (RPI), Education, Employment, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Sanctions, Incentives, Rearrests, Classification of Original Offense, Classification of Re-Offense, and Time To Failure. This study continues the research begun by prior researchers into the impact of Federal Reentry Court by analyzing correlations of graduation and calculating the rate of recidivism among federal releasees. A quasi-experimental design will be used to test the null hypothesis: Participation in Federal Reentry Court has no effect on the rates of recidivism among offenders released to the supervision of the WDNY. The methods employed to test this hypothesis included: Pearson's Correlation, Chi-Square, Difference of Means, Logistic Regression, Linear Regression (OLS), and Survival Analysis (Hazard Ratios) and, Multiple Regression. Moreover, in an effort to measure, more precisely, behavioral change, this study attempts to construct and test a new coefficient to measure any effect the Federal Reentry Court may have on any discernable change in the criminal behavior of the offenders who do recidivate. This coefficient (i.e., Degree of Recidivism Scale) seeks to measure behavioral change by observing the seriousness of the criminal conduct (Degree of Criminality Score) in the subsequent offenses, in conjunction with the offenders' time until failure (Offense Abatement Interval), within a three-year period.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino

Jacob R. Finney

A Program Evaluation Of Bridges To Health

Abstract: The purpose of this evaluation is to establish measurable outcomes and identify the success of a community-based program. Children that enter into the public care system are more likely than the general population to display emotional, educational, behavioral, and psychological issues which may inevitably contribute negatively to their social and emotional development. Bridges to Health (B2H) is a Medicaid waiver program in New York State that provides community-based services and coordination. To qualify, clients must be in foster care or the Division of Juvenile Justice Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY) in addition to having a mental health diagnosis, behavioral, or emotional issues. Overall, the study demonstrates the program is successful at maintaining a client's placement, and adapting to individualized needs. Several child domain scores were predictors of client outcomes which include: *living situation*, *education*, and *optimism*.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Carol Nowak, Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Stephanie Gerwel

Tracking Sex Offender Management and Treatment Act Cases Across New York State

Abstract: There are currently many laws in place throughout the United States requiring the registration and notification of sex offenders to protect communities. However, without giving the proper treatment to offenders, the root of the problem is not being effectively corrected. With the Sex Offender Management and Treatment Act (SOMTA) of 2007, qualifying sex offenders either go into Civil Confinement or Strict and Intensive Supervision and Treatment to provide the necessary treatment and give the tools needed for the offender to live an offense free life, decrease recidivism, and make communities safer. A sample of SOMTA cases was collected from the New York State Attorney General's office. A series of dates were collected for each case as well as demographics, type of victim, type of crime, and psychological diagnoses. The results will show which New York State Attorney General Offices are moving cases to trial to reach a final determination faster than others and that an offender's race and age is significantly related to the type of victim.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and John Culhane J.D.

A.Yves Gnohoue

A Descriptive Study Of Health Literacy Practices At Greater Buffalo United Accountable Healthcare Network

Abstract: Low Functional health literacy is a problem affecting 90 million residents of the United States. Among the 90 million, 36% are adults who have “below basic” health literacy skills. Assessing health literacy is important in improving health behaviors, health outcomes, and perceived communication barriers related to health. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act enacted in 2010 brought about changes that demand a more coordinated approach to manage health care services. This research focused on the efforts being made to promote health literacy at Medicaid health homes such as Greater Buffalo United Accountable Healthcare Network (GBUAHN). This research consisted of observation of Patient Health Navigator interactions with patients in order to identify best practices of health literacy initiatives within GBUAHN. Results suggest best practices include promoting and establishing relationship to effectively enhance patients understanding of all their healthcare needs. This study suggests that GBUAHN should continue making use of recommendations related health literacy promotion while exploring areas of improvement as noted on scorecard. Patient Health Navigators are engaging patient in manner that will establish adherence within patients.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Kush Haq

Bonnie M. Goodrich

An Exploratory Study on Senior Programs for the Aging Intellectually Disabled

Abstract: In the last four decades, aging intellectually disabled are living as long as their non-disabled counterparts but there are limited programs and services available. Research has shown with necessary supports, such as internal, social and financial resources; aging intellectually disabled can have increased quality of life and increased longevity. Using data collected from a recorded guided discussion with Medicaid Service Coordinators, this exploratory study examined the availability of current programs and what programs and services are required to meet the needs of aging intellectually disabled over 62.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko & Dr. Kush Haq

Stacey Gura

Assessing the Perceived Need of the Developmentally Disabled Adults

Abstract: A therapeutic needs assessment was utilized to collect data from a specific Southern Erie County area in Western New York. The purpose of this study was to measure the perceived need of an inclusive service center for adults with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities in the south town area from an agency perspective. Currently clinics that provide appropriately trained staff and specialized services for people with disabilities are located outside the local area. The data was gathered by utilizing Survey Monkey to distribute the surveys to be completed by the agency management supervising residential sites. The survey questions were developed by the researcher in order to determine the specific need for such a medical facility in the south town area. The survey collected data from six agencies and across nine zip codes in Southern Erie County. Thirty-five respondents answered questions on 179 individuals receiving therapeutic services living in the area. This research suggests from the agency perspective client needs are being met. However from an individual residential group home perspective the perceived need for additional services remains.

Faculty mentors: Professor Kate Eskew and Dr. Edward Pristach

Melissa Lindner

An Exploratory Study of Caregiver Attitudes Regarding Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Abstract: This study explored the need for a post-secondary education continuation for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This existing data was gathered by Summit Educational Resources by administering surveys via SurveyMonkey to caregivers within their community who have been diagnosed with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The research was analyzed in SPSS and Excel software. This study shows that there is interest for a program for those with intellectual and or developmental disabilities at Hilbert College. This study provided important information on caregiver preferences regarding a potential program on the college campus.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Professor Kate Eskew

John D. McIvor

Exploring The Need To Change Regulatory Practices Within The New York State Motor Vehicle Inspection Program

Abstract: Privatization of vehicle inspection services that were originally provided by the government has created several concerns. The possibility of changing regulatory procedures is increased when practices no longer follow the interests of the State for one reason or another. The individuals entrusted with conducting inspections have potential to misuse their granted authority for motives other than public safety. An investigative study was conducted regarding the effectiveness of the New York State Motor Vehicle Inspection System in order to explore the possible need for change in regulatory practices. Analysis of the data revealed a trend between inspection outcomes and how recently the inspector was certified, however the results were not statistically significant. The study also failed to achieve statistical significance when comparing privately conducted inspection outcomes to corporate conducted inspection outcomes. This research has potential as a starting point to justify moving forward with future investigation of privatization affecting government regulation.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Brian C. Reed and Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Wyleia Miller

A Framework to Address Poverty through Collaboration

Abstract: Many non-profit and government human service agencies work in silos to address poverty. This research provides a framework that allows poverty to be addressed through collaborations. Based on a comprehensive framework modeled after the *Components for Success*, in *The Shared Prosperity of Philadelphia Plan*, the focus areas use a cooperation and collaboration philosophy. The characteristics of the framework illustrate how NPOs and government agencies working together effectively have: 1) A Coordinated Plan, 2) Leadership Buy-In, 3) A Comprehensive Pre-assessment System, 4) Continuous Interaction, 5) Restructuring of Service Delivery, in order to have a notable impact on poverty. The objectives of this research are to examine the activities of Buffalo's Poverty Coalition and determine if the partners enjoy the characteristics of an effective collaboration. The methodology used in the study allows an opportunity to assess the progress of the Poverty Coalition using tools from emerging best practices through qualitative analysis.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Carol Nowak and Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Paul K. Mullen

The Effect of Mentorship on Recidivism Rates in the Buffalo Veteran's Treatment Court

Abstract: There are 21.5 million veterans of the armed services in the United States, as of January 1, 2015. Many have seen extensive combat and now suffer from lasting side-effects of their service. Unfortunately, many of these veterans suffer from mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); the effects of physical injuries suffered, the inability to find employment or remain employed, homelessness, as well as relationship issues resulting in domestic violence (Russell, 2009). Often these issues receive little attention and subsequently little to no treatment, and when left untreated, the veteran often ends up in the criminal justice system. In 2009, Buffalo, NY City Court Judge Robert Russell created the world's first Veteran's Treatment Court to specifically handle cases involving veterans. He realized that there were courts to specifically deal with drug/alcohol addiction and mental health issues but not to handle the very specific issues created as a result of military service. The Veteran's Treatment Court provides a robust peer mentorship program, not provided in the other courts, that assists the participants in the program in negotiating not only the criminal justice system, but also the Veterans Administration health care system where many receive their treatment. This study analyzes how peer mentoring positively effects the recidivism rates among participants in the Buffalo Veteran's Treatment Court.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Martin Floss; Dr. Kathleen Pierino and John Culhane, J.D.

Emelie Obrochta

Exploring Delivery Outcomes in Erie County

Abstract: Early elective deliveries are inductions or cesarean procedures performed prior to 39 completed weeks gestation without medical necessity. These deliveries pose greater risk for NICU admissions, increased rates of infection, hemorrhage and hospital readmission. These risks increase length of hospital stay, therefore increasing cost to both patients and insurance payers. Unfortunately, several states continue to hold early elective deliveries rates of 20-30%. Research shows variation in cesarean rates among hospitals could not be explained by maternal characteristics or clinical diagnoses. Instead, factors such as hospital guidelines, protocols and norms, may be contributing to the increasing cesarean rates.

This descriptive research study evaluated pre-collected data to compare cesarean section and vaginal birth after cesarean rates of Erie County, New York hospitals to national rates.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Professor Bruce Boissonnault

Jillian A. Oehler

The Role Of Emotional Intelligence In High Employee Performance

Abstract: Research indicates emotional intelligence (E.I.) is the single most significant predictor of performance in the workplace and accounts for 58 percent of performance across-the-board in the workplace. For the purpose of this study, participants completed two separate questionnaires according to job title. Direct support employees completed the *Employee Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Questionnaire*, whereas supervisors of direct support employees completed the *Performance Evaluation Questionnaire*. Pearson Correlation statistics will be utilized to test for a relationship between emotional intelligence and high employee performance in the workplace. The results of this study will serve as a resource to benefit a non-for-profit agency which provides senior services and services for persons with intellectual disabilities. Whether the agency would benefit from implementing emotional intelligence training to increase high performance in the workplace will be determined.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Brian C. Reed

Louis J. Petrucci

High School Graduation Rates Disaggregated By Relation To Chronological Cohort And Years Of Attendance At A Single High School

Abstract: This study disaggregated graduation rate data by a student's relation to their cohort, whether at grade level or number of years behind their chronological cohort entering freshman year, and the number of continuous years they attended one specific high school. This study concentrated on three (3) graduating classes at South Park High School that completed their studies between 2009 and 2011. These factors were used along with the traditional accountability groups such as gender, race, poverty, and whether the student had an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This research intended to identify whether a statistical relationship exists between the overall graduation rate and these factors in an effort to better identify whether a student will achieve a Regents diploma within the four years prescribed to be classified within the defined graduating class.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Ron Eskew & Dr. Carol Nowak

Kirsten Swanson

Education: A Key Preventative to Ending Veteran Homelessness

Abstract: The number of veteran student applicants has increased since 2008 following significant changes to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This presents a need for administrators to assess current programs and services. The focus of this study is to explore the recruitment and retention of the veteran student population on college campuses. The Western New York Veteran (WNY) Consortium is made up of 21 military and veteran friendly colleges. A SWOT analysis completed by 5 participating colleges revealed a necessity for training faculty and staff on specific needs of veterans, a need for consistency among veteran service offices, and a critical need for funding is essential to recruiting and retaining the veteran student population. The results of this study will be provided to the WNY Veterans Consortium for consideration and further development of veterans services.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Carol Nowak and Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Karl Frederick Swarts

Connecting Hamburg – Bringing Municipal WIFI to the Village

Abstract: Municipal WIFI refers to local networks of wireless Internet that are built by or for local governments, for the use of that government and the general public. The purpose of this project is to develop a proposal for the implementation of a municipal WIFI network in the Village of Hamburg. The final design configuration will consist of eight outdoor and two indoor sites. Free Internet access will be available to anyone on a wireless device while within the parameters of that location. As of publication, the Village of Hamburg Board of Trustees is considering this proposal for the 2015-16 budget cycle. In addition, the Village of Hamburg Economic Development Committee has adopted this MWN initiative into their comprehensive plan. Resolution on this matter is expected by spring or early summer 2015.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Brian C. Reed & Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Christina Tonge

An Exploratory Study Of The Effect Of Presenteeism And Absenteeism On Retention

Abstract: The question of absenteeism and presenteeism is widely debated in the Human Resources. The literature has not adequately addressed how these two management concerns affect retention. This research addressed the issue of absenteeism and presenteeism with attention to intent to leave by focusing on the overall rate of absence and lack of productivity. Data obtained from 43 respondents of the self-designed survey found statistical significance between absenteeism and the intent to leave. A level of statistical significance was not achieved between presenteeism and the intent to leave. A trend in the data shows that the intent to leave when engaged in presenteeism approximately doubled as opposed to those with a lower rate of presenteeism. The findings demonstrate the relationships between both absenteeism and presenteeism and the effect on intent to leave. Future research is needed to clarify and strengthen the defense regarding organizational costs and benefits from having engaged employees. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining both issues, sheds new light on the expanding field of Human Resources and offers suggestions for continued research.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Brian Reed

Alise Underwood

Revisiting the Concept of Organizational Change on Person–Organizational Fit: A Review of the Sanctuary Model and Its Effects on Employee Satisfaction.

Abstract: Organizational culture has become an important theme in management research due to its potential to affect the organization's desired outcomes. Though organizations are now more aware of the correlations between employee satisfaction and employee effectiveness, numerous models claim to provide the correct method to achieving the perfect balance between the two. The purpose of this study is to investigate the existing management model "Sanctuary" at Baker Victory Services. The research desired to find significant changes in employee satisfaction from 2010 and 2011. Using the Herzberg Two-Factor Theory and the Person-Organizational Fit Model, this study found a significant decrease in all categories of employee satisfaction reviewed. It is recommended that future research be conducted to review the decrease in satisfaction as an increasing trend was reported in the previous study conducted on the data of 2009-2010.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Brian C. Reed

Morgan J. Woodson

Returning the Favor of Service: How can Hilbert College Assist Student Veterans in the Military to College Transition?

Abstract: Hilbert College embraces diversity and has extended its mission to providing more support to its rising population of student veterans by establishing an Office of Veteran Services. Student veterans are normally older, have financial responsibilities that may include a dependent child or spouse, have many non-traditional life experiences, and may be suffering from physical or emotional wounds of war. The contrast between a traditional student and a student veteran presents a disparity in services that Hilbert College is trying to address. Using data collected through a Hilbert College student veteran survey, a national student veteran survey, best practices at other college institutions, and numerous journals, this research discovers the main barriers that military veterans face during their transition from the military to college and seeks to remedy those issues by proposing programs that can be implemented by Hilbert College's Office of Veteran Services.

Faculty mentors: Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Brian C. Reed