

**Jack Adley**

***The Impact of Opioid Overdose Death***

**Abstract:**

Opioid Epidemic has been on the rise: many addicts have lost their life to opioid overdose, which resulted in the suffering of family members. The research focuses on the impact of opioid overdose death on family members. The survey of the research includes questions that are directed to show the relationship between addicts and family members, as well the amount of knowledge they may know about opioid overdose, treatments and Narcan training. The researcher conducted phone interviews with the family members from a list provided by the Erie County Health Department. The research will bring significant amount of information provided by family members. The information collected may help the criminal justice system and the healthcare system develop strategies to help reduce the opioid epidemic and the impact on family members affected by losing someone to opioid overdose.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Debra Smith, MS**

**Keyshla Michelle Arce**

***Prison Cost: Prison Spending and How it Affects Recidivism Rates***

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this project is to review and analyze what impacts recidivism rates. Recidivism rates is an important topic of discussion, due to the billions of dollars spent annually in the prison system. Every state spends an average of \$60,000 plus every year to operate and maintain prisons. Therefore, what exactly is causing the prison system to have such a high demand of money every year?

There are many components that contribute to prison spending. Mandatory minimum sentences, determinate and indeterminate sentences, and the overcrowding of prisons. These topics play a major role in the prison cost, since these are some of the guidelines judges follow when sentencing an offender. This research project seeks to answer the question: How does prison spending affect recidivism rate and in what ways can this rate be reduced?

This study will seek to inform and help the criminal justice system find ways that will benefit the prison system reduce recidivism rates, which will lead to less prison overcrowding, lowering prison-operating costs, and ultimately saving the country money.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Marti Floss and Dr. John Culhane, J.D.**

**David Augustyniak Jr.**

***Raise the Age Law: Impact on Probation Departments***

**Abstract:**

Raise the Age Law is about raising the age of criminal responsibility to eighteen years old, but the impacts of this legal change have not been fully studied. The purpose of this research project is to develop a better understanding of what problems will result from raising the age of criminal responsibility and to examine what resources will be needed. This longitudinal study will examine data two years before Raise the Age Law went into effect and two years after it was put into place. The focus of the project will be the extent to which RTAL has increased probation officer caseloads and waiting times for services and treatments. The data will be collected from the Erie County Department of Probation located in Erie County, New York.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Yvonne Downes and Dr. Martin Floss**

**Cherise R. Carson**

***After School Programs in Inner - City Communities***

**Abstract:**

After school programs have been in existence for almost 70 years and are continuously growing. The programs and services provided to students that participate can have a monumental impact on the outcome of their daily interactions and behavior. This study examined whether attendance in the after school program had an influence on the increase of positive routine and structure for children who participated. It also examined the effects of participation in enrichment programs offered on the level of engagement in students. Additionally the research sought to determine if there was successful fostering of relationships between staff and students in the after school program. This study included data collected at three Buffalo Public Schools and two community centers located in inner city communities throughout Western New York provided by Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services of WNY. The tool used in this study was a 26-question survey that sought information on program experience and an opportunity for feedback on areas of improvement with responses such as *yes*, *not really*, and *kind of*. An independent one-tailed *t*- test was conducted. Students who were successful with fostering a relationship with staff had a statistically significantly higher average ( $M = 118.00$ ,  $SD = 17.34$ ),  $t(6) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .013$  than the average amount of students who responded they were not successful ( $M = 82.00$ ,  $SD = 17.34$ ). According to this study, after school programs in inner-city communities are successful in fostering positive relationships between staff and the students that are in attendance.

**Faculty Mentors: Professor Kim Chiarmonite, MA, Dr. Brian Poliner and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

**Jacqueline Judith Guox**

***Experience and Factors of Violence in the Lives of the Homeless***

**Abstract:**

Homelessness is a growing problem across the country and homeless people are among the most vulnerable people in society. Considering the significant literature used for this research, the following makes the argument that homeless people are victimized at high rates. Other studies and research tend to focus on the real or alleged criminal involvement of the homeless, due to the negative attitudes from the public. This project aims to show that most people who are experiencing homelessness face higher levels of victimization than housed people. This will be done through surveys given to the administrators of homeless shelters due to homeless individuals not being able to be individually identified through an address or any similar identification information. The findings from the study will not be able to be generalized beyond the study because homeless populations can vary from one geographical location and can change over time. Homeless people are often ignored and misunderstood – having an insight into the nature and extent into the individual’s homelessness – can help to create solutions or tailor existing government programs and healthcare services which were established to help homeless individuals.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Yvonne Downes**

**Alaina Hughes**

***Police Executive Training***

**Abstract:**

The purpose this graduate research project was to evaluate a new curriculum designed to provide Police Chiefs and County Sheriffs a concentrated 4-day Executive Police Training, that was conducted at Hilbert College during May 2019, and sponsored by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Thirteen participants remained on campus and stayed in the dorms. Attendees participated in ½ or full, day long training sessions that covered: Organizational Management & Theory; Assessing Security Risks; Finance & Budgets; Ethics in Law Enforcement; Human Resources, and Planning & Program Evaluation.

Participants was given a pre-test, post-test and course evaluation for each course that they attended. Research findings found that this training was very successful, and participants unanimously expressed gratitude for the experience and opportunity, and stated that they thought that this program should be offered to other police administrators.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Mark Paoni and Dr. Martin Floss**

**Brett M. Kane**

***Restorative Justice and Recidivism: Successful Reintegration through Connection to Community***

**Abstract:**

The traditional justice system in the United States has been criticized due to the number of challenges throughout the system. One specific challenge is the recidivism rate of returning community members from prison. There are multiple significant factors that help reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Out of these factors, one specific example is connection to community. One method of supporting returning community members from correctional institutions to gain connection to their community is through the use of restorative practices, specifically restorative circles. This study examines the impact of restorative circles on returning community members, focusing on relationship building with the community. It will use community-building methods to foster relationships and connection together. This study will support positive rehabilitative approaches for individual reintegration methods in communities.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Yvonne Downes**

**Hunter J. Kellerman**

***Employee Satisfaction of Administrators and Support Staff in the United States***

**Abstract:**

Employee satisfaction throughout the U.S has been the subject of significant research in an effort to provide empirical evidence to support the ideal environment for employee and employer. While the literature shows that multiple facets of inquiry are necessary to determine the accuracy and validity of total satisfaction, this study seeks to examine a single element and its impact on ones satisfaction score. This study utilizes secondary data from a previous study (Poliner, 2016) to determine the relevance of structuring one area of inquiry and its affect on satisfaction to determine the statistical significance of its effect on overall satisfaction. The findings indicate that more than one potential factor of satisfaction is needed to gain finite accurate data having higher statistical significance.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Brian Poliner, Dr. Dana Bagwell, Professor Kim Chiarmonete, MA**



**RaShelle Kostin**

***Property Crime Analyst for Monroe County, New York***

**Abstract:**

Burglary and larceny have been around for centuries and in the 1990's crime analysis came to fruition to study such crime, but it took until the 2000's to open Crime Analysis Centers (CACs) like in Erie and Monroe County, NY. Monroe Crime Analysis Center (MCAC) recently removed its property analyst position and is now pondering whether that was a beneficial decision. CACs help decrease the amount of crime in certain areas which is why the presence of certain analysts are important like property crime analysts. Analyzing crime helps develop knowledge of trends/rates and hot spots and by looking at this data, a conclusion can be drawn whether the presence of this analyst is beneficial or necessary by comparing MCAC data to Erie Crime Analysis Center (ECAC) crime rates. A possible result of this research is that MCAC will find it beneficial to bring back the property analyst position. This research will be beneficial to both MCAC and ECAC for future crime prevention practices and other information.

Key words: Burglary, Larceny, CACs, Property Analyst, Hot Spots

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane, J.D.**

# **Harriet Renee Lynn Lowery**

## ***Bail Reform***

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this project is to examine the impact of race and education on bail decisions in Erie County, New York. The staggering problems associated with mass incarceration, especially those problems that disproportionately impact black people, their families and especially poor urban neighborhoods across America all begin with individuals being jailed (Turner 2020). Once in jail, the issue of whom can make bail is critically important as the accused begin the attempt to successfully defend against criminal charges. According to Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York lawmakers, it was important to address inequalities in New York State bail practices. It was important to understand how cash bail was impacted by race and socio-economic status (NYCLU 2020).

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane, J.D.**

**Colleen M. Mahoney**

***Measuring Raise the Age of Juvenile Responsibility: Financial Cost  
Relating to Passing the Legislation***

**Abstract:**

On October 1, 2018, New York State implemented the first phase of its Raise the Age legislation, raising the age of criminal responsibility from sixteen to seventeen years old. The second phase of the legislation took effect on October 1, 2019 and increased the age of criminal responsibility from seventeen to its current level of eighteen years of age. Driving the legislation is evidence that juveniles lack of maturity, responsibility, and decision-making skills, and therefore should not be held to the same level of criminal responsibility as adults. In the FY2019 State Budget, Governor Cuomo proposed \$100 million for the implementation of the Raise the Age legislation due to anticipated increased costs associated with, but not limited to, department infrastructural costs, court costs, transportation, and programming expenses. Previous expenditures in these areas will be measured and compared to those that have currently been budgeted for, to determine whether current budget allocations are sufficient.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane, J.D.**

**Hannah R. Prenoveau**

***Officer Perceptions of Body-Worn Cameras within the Cheektowaga Police Department***

**Abstract:**

Recently law enforcement agencies have been influenced by the media to equip their officers with body-worn cameras to help reduce officer use of force and citizen complaints. Due to the call for body-worn cameras, researchers have paired up with various police departments to analyze if body-worn cameras are effective enough to spend part of the department's budget. The Cheektowaga Police Department is in the process of implementing body-worn cameras. Before the Cheektowaga Police Department implements body-worn cameras, they should understand the history of policing and its relationship with the media, as well as study other departments that have experience with body-worn cameras. The Cheektowaga Police Department can then utilize a survey to ask their officers about their attitudes and perceptions of body-worn cameras within the department.

Keywords: body-worn cameras, attitudes, perceptions, Cheektowaga Police Department, effects of media

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor and John Culhane, J.D.**

**Chloe M. Randall**

***Prison Education: Reducing Recidivism through Prison Education***

**Abstract:**

In the past few decades, correctional rehabilitation programs have improved in implementing effective programs to rehabilitate incarcerated individuals; the education programs specifically have had measurable impacts on recidivism rates. The purpose of this research project is to analyze the impacts of correctional education on recidivism rates and prison culture. Previous research shows that inmate's attitudes and perceptions of education also have an impact on their success levels after enrolling in prison education programs, along with positively impacting prison culture. Survey data was collected to analyze the effects of prison education and the backgrounds of prisoners that enroll in these programs to gauge success levels and what factors can predict who succeeds and benefits most from higher education in prisons. Impacts of this research hope to motivate others into enrolling in education programs to decrease their chances of recidivism after release.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Mark Paoni**

**Elaine M. Richards**

***Employer Implemented Wellness Program: An Analysis of Participation and Awareness***

**Abstract:**

The importance of workplace wellness programs has been explored through several case studies, medicinal research, and satisfaction surveys. In order to further investigate the impact of a workplace wellness program, this study analyzed a program implemented by General Physician, PC. The *Maintain Not Gain* program was offered for employees to participate in through the holiday season for the past two years, with an objective to maintain your start weight by two pounds. By utilizing secondary data from Lawley Insurance to find the statistical significance of the program results, suggestions were able to be made for an improved future program. In addition, an employee survey was used to measure the overall attitudes surrounding workplace wellness programs and the likelihood of employees to participate. By utilizing the results of this survey, General Physician, PC has the direct feedback from current employees and can choose to implement new and improved wellness programs. This study was designed to measure what worked for this program and what did not through statistical analysis and feedback from employees that both did and did not participate in the program. Highlighting the notion that not all wellness programs will suit all employees was also supported by the survey responses. Workplace wellness programs are anticipated to grow within organizations and studies of this nature provide the necessary feedback to justify the investment.

**Faculty Mentors: Professor Bridget Conti and Dr. Brian Poliner**

**Jennifer Sanders**

***Wyoming County Drug Court and Recidivism***

**Abstract:**

Drug addiction has been an ongoing issue for thousands of years. The National Institute of Drug Addiction defines addiction as a chronic, relapsing brain disease, that produces compulsive drug seeking behavior. Throughout history there have been many reasons and events that have led up to drug and alcohol addiction. Studies have shown that drug courts are effective in helping treat drug addiction. Drug Court is a specialized court that targets criminal offenders who have drug addiction and dependency problems and are often used as an alternative to jail/prison. Drug courts offer opportunities that jails/prisons cannot, which is why they are so successful. The purpose of this study is to see if Drug Treatment Court in Wyoming County is successful. Recidivism is the biggest problem associated with alcohol and drug dependency issues. At the completion of this study, drug court in Wyoming County, New York has shown to be successful at reducing recidivism rates. Only 5 participants out of 128 participants recidivated while in drug court. Gender had a significant difference on whether the participant recidivated, while highest level of education had a significant difference on failure or graduation of the program. Although not significant, younger participants were more successful in the program as opposed to older participants, however younger participants were more likely to die of an overdose. Cocaine/amphetamine users were more likely to be rearrested than participants who had another drug of choice. Future research should include a bigger sample size and following the participants at least one year after completion; this may yield more significant results.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane, J.D.**

**Olivia Schibeci**

***The Effects of Crisis Intervention Training in Law Enforcement***

**Abstract:**

People who suffer from mental illnesses should be given a safe and swift route to the best treatment options for their illness. Crisis Intervention Training focuses on the effect of training officers' attitudes, recognition of mental illness, injuries, and call dispositions (Watson et al., 2008). The purpose of this study is to determine if CIT programs improve officers' attitudes, abilities to more safely interact with persons with mental illness, their preparedness levels, and anxiety levels towards these calls after the training. In addition, this study will explore relationships between these variables along with determining if there is a higher jail diversion rate. Society and law enforcement perceive encounters with mentally ill individuals as dangerous, unpredictable, and a burden. With the implementation of additional education, this stigma and encounters can become a safer and more positive experience for everyone. This study would like to reveal the effects of CIT training on law enforcement officers in order to determine if the training is making a meaningful impact and safer interactions in society.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor Culhane, J.D.**



**Brittany Seneca**

***Cultural Awareness in Native American Health Care***

**Abstract:**

The struggles Native American tribes have been through since the arrival of European settlers has directly influenced their descendants. Many of the Native American nations are suffering still today from racial inequalities that directly affect their health. Native Americans have a lower life expectancy than the average American. They also suffer from higher rates of diabetes and heart disease.

The research into the importance of culture awareness in health care has shown that the implementation of a cultural awareness program can be beneficial. Health care professionals can improve the quality of care by being aware of cultural differences of those they serve. Cultural awareness and diversity in health care is not only important to the patient outcomes but also to the treatment. It is important to have knowledge of other cultures because what is normal in one culture may be considered disrespectful in another. The knowledge of these values and norms have proved to be important in order to properly treat patients and improve patient care.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Brian Poliner and Dr. Mary Diana Pouli**

**Colleen C. Steffen**

***Community-Based Learning: Trocaire College***

**Abstract:**

Community-based learning at Trocaire College, located in South Buffalo, New York, is facilitated through the signature program, the Mercy Action Project. The Mercy Action Project has been designed to provide all Trocaire College students with a service opportunity within the community. The mission of Trocaire College and the core values of Trocaire College are threaded through the Mercy Action Project, specifically in the mission workshops that are facilitated at the beginning of the semester and small group reflections that are facilitated at the end of the semester. Using the data collected in a survey that was administered to students registered in the Fall 2019 semester of the Mercy Action project at Trocaire College, this pretest-posttest research examined the knowledge of key elements of the Catholic and Mercy Education and Trocaire College's core values. The comparison of the total number of key elements of Catholic and Mercy Education and Trocaire College's core values were found statistically significant as measured by a paired *t*-test with results of  $p < .001$ . The data that was collected also measured the propensity towards an increasing desire to volunteer after the completion of the Mercy Action Project. As measured by chi-square, the student's stated propensity to volunteer increased by 82% after the completion of the Mercy Action Project.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dana K. Bagwell and Dr. Brian Poliner**

**Lindsey A. Wheeler**

***Raise the Age: Extending the Age of Juvenile Responsibility in New York State and its Effects on Recidivism Rates in Erie County***

**Abstract:**

With the implementation of the “Raise the Age” legislation across the United States, more recently within New York State, many changes regarding juvenile criminal offenders can be expected. By extending the age of criminal responsibility for juvenile offenders as an attempt for a more rehabilitative approach towards justice, it is important to examine whether this legislation will have any significant effects on juvenile offender recidivism rates in Erie County. The purpose of this study is to determine if the implementation of the recently enacted “Raise the Age” legislation – specifically focusing on Erie County within New York State – will result in lower recidivism rates among juvenile offenders. The study uses data, previously collected from Erie County Probation Department, regarding juvenile offenses, before and after the implementation of the “Raise the Age” legislation in New York State, while also exploring possible correlations between gender, race, and socioeconomic status. This study will aid in discovering if the implementation of the “Raise the Age” legislation within New York will have any significant effects on juvenile offenders in Erie County, while fostering a more rehabilitative approach towards juvenile offenders.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane, J.D.**

**Jonathan C. Ziders**

***The Opioid Epidemic: Their Voices, Their Lives***

**Abstract:**

The opioid epidemic has taken hundreds of thousands of lives over the past two decades, but addiction and death due to opioids continue to be an issue throughout the United States. For this study, interviews were conducted with family members that have lost someone they love due to an opioid overdose and, in some cases, those in recovery. The study was multi-faceted, and inquiries were made into several areas, including life history, mental health, interactions with the healthcare system, and the criminal justice system. This portion of the research emphasized the criminal justice system and its interaction with the decedent, as well as those in recovery. Through these conversations, it became clear the criminal justice system can make improvements in how it interacts with those suffering from addiction to mitigate the risk of death due to an overdose and help direct the individual on a path towards recovery. However, the criminal justice system cannot do this on its own. Coordination and cooperation are keys between those suffering from addiction, their families, healthcare providers, mental health field, social services, and the criminal justice system. Through an umbrella-like approach among all parties, the tragic consequences of overdose may be diminished or averted, giving rise to hope and life.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Martin Floss and Cori Thurman, MS**