

Media News



Courtesy Photo/NMSU



Criminal Justice class



Message from the Department Head

As I reflect upon the past six months to compose the biannual newsletter, I realize that it has been an exciting semester, with much happening since our Fall Newsletter. As I mentioned in our Fall Newsletter, I was able to travel to Tulsa, Oklahoma as a guest of the Tulsa Police Department. I toured their impressive training academy, the city, their crime lab and evidence lockers. I was also able to take a ride along with a recent graduate of our program. Tulsa is one of just a few municipal law enforcement agencies that requires a bachelor's degree to become a Police Officer. We are very proud that about 50 of those officers are graduates of our program. Our department is in the process of formalizing a partnership with the Tulsa Police Department wherein students in our program can finish their last semester at the Tulsa Police Academy. Those students will finish their degree at NMSU while attending the academy, and graduate from both becoming Tulsa Police Officers. It is an outstanding opportunity for our students, and we hope to increase the number of Aggies who serve as police officers in Tulsa.

I am also very happy to report that we were successful in hiring two new tenure-track faculty members who will start at NMSU in August. Both hires were our top candidates, and NMSU and our department are very lucky to have them joining us. Jessica Corey is finishing up her Ph.D. at UT Dallas, and Mari-Esther Edward completed her Ph.D. from Kansas State University this past December. Both bring a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to our department. We will feature news stories about both of our new faculty members in our fall newsletter.

I am also very excited to mention that one of our graduate students will be attending the University of Nebraska-Omaha to pursue her Ph.D. Taylor Gonzales, who was a student in my Advanced Research Methods class my first year back at NMSU (2018), has been offered an outstanding research assistantship in their School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. She is slated to work under Dr. Gaylene Armstrong during her studies. Taylor applied to several of the top Ph.D. programs in the country and was offered assistantships at each. I know she had a difficult decision to make, but ultimately, she chose the University of Nebraska-Omaha. We wish Taylor our best as she continues her studies in this outstanding Ph.D. program.

Media News



Learning in CJ Classroom



Poste Presentation by CJ student



Message from the Department Head

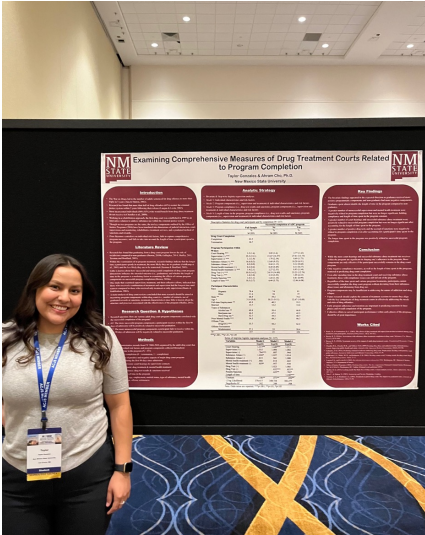
I was able to exchange several emails with one of Ron Pincomb's sons last year. He was a close friend of my brother and must have been bored one day and decided to look at our website. He was surprised and happy to hear that I had returned to NMSU. Let me quote his email, "I happened to be looking at NMSU's website and saw your name. I didn't realize you had moved from PA back to Cruces. My dad would have been so proud to know you are running the department. It brought back memories of all of us on our hunting trips." Oh, the stories I could tell everyone about our legendary hunting trips!!

As Alumni of NMSU I am sure most of you have heard some disheartening stories about our Aggie Basketball program. As a former student and very proud alumni myself, attending basketball games and interacting with the players was one of the highlights of my years as a student. (I remember meeting Larry Bird when the Aggies hosted Indiana State University)! Trust that the university is doing everything in their power to bring this once, very proud program back to prominence. I would also like to announce with great pride that Dr. Sandra Trujillo saw an opportunity in these events to bring attention to a problem. She is actively putting together a student group to support survivors of violence who report. The first event in this campaign took place on February 20th where a group of students and faculty met to "stand in solidarity with hazing violence, victim-survivors and witnesses who report." This group of motivated individuals is now fund raising to purchase materials that can be distributed on campus at baseball and softball games to further bring attention to this problem. I will update everyone on this initiative as it continues to grow and bring awareness to this important issue.

As I always do, let me make an open invitation to each of you to stop by or drop us a note and let us know how you are doing. I truly enjoy meeting with alumni and reminiscing about the early years of our program. Just last month I talked with an alumnus from the 70's who remembered both Ed Farris and Dick Lease (both faculty members when I started the program). Much has changed in our department, but one thing is a constant – the pride we have in the accomplishments of our graduates.

Featuring CJ Graduate Student - Taylor Gonzales

Dr. Ahram Cho arranged an interview with Taylor to gather insights about accepting an offer for one of the top Ph.D. programs in the country.



Taylor Gonzales

Can you tell me a little about yourself?

My name is Taylor Gonzales. I am originally from Albuquerque but have lived in Las Cruces for six years while completing my degrees. I am a second-year master's student in the criminal justice department, and I will be graduating in May. I previously earned my bachelor's in psychology and criminal justice from NMSU in the spring of 2021. During my time as a graduate student, I worked as a teaching assistant for a handful of professors, and I am currently working as an adjunct instructor teaching two undergraduate courses.

How did you decide to pursue a master's degree- and, even further, a thesis?

I felt that I have always been a good student, and when Dr. Posadas had approached me about doing the Master's Accelerated Program (MAP) as an undergrad student, I viewed it as a challenge. I was willing to take on the task whether I chose to pursue the degree or not. However, after graduating during the immediate aftermath of COVID, I did not feel prepared to hop into the workforce. Thus, I chose to attend graduate school as I had already accrued some credits.

While in the program, I came in with the mindset of wanting to take the comprehensive exams and graduate as quickly as possible. However, I took Dr. Cho's policy analysis class my first semester, and my mind was quickly changed. I wrote a paper about drug treatment court programs for the course, and Dr. Cho approached me afterward. She asked if I would like to further develop my paper for a thesis project as she had available data on the local drug courts. From that point on, I have worked closely with her to complete my thesis.

Could you tell me more about your thesis and other research experiences that have prepared you for a Ph.D.?

Prior to completing my thesis, Dr. Cho and I worked on a technical report together that was submitted to the drug court, evaluating the adult drug court program across the past two decades. Through using this dataset to produce the technical report, I quickly learned the data and formulated research questions based on the variables given. From these research questions, I was able to narrow in on a topic that I used for my graduate thesis. Specifically, I used this dataset to examine which drug court programmatic components are effective in predicting successful completion within a fixed time period.

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Featuring CJ Graduate Student - Taylor Gonzales



Taylor Gonzales

In finding research implications through my thesis project, I have also begun working on a manuscript for drug courts in conjunction with Dr. Cho, which we hope to have sent out for publication by the end of the semester. I have felt that these three writings have helped boost my CV and show doctoral program directors that I am capable and willing to engage in research.

What made you decide to pursue a Ph.D. in criminology and criminal justice?

During the time I have worked on my thesis, I have come to realize that I enjoy engaging in research. I wanted to continue my education to better explore the questions I had about the criminal justice system. Thus, furthering my education to earn a Ph.D. would allow me the opportunity to engage in research that could make a difference in the way that the criminal justice system operates. Being able to work on different projects with criminal justice faculty members has opened opportunities that I didn't know were available to my discipline. I did not think that Ph.D. could be something that was in my realm of abilities, but Dr. Cho, Dr. Giever, and other faculty members have instilled in me a level of confidence. As I had much of my thesis completed in the fall, I attended the American Society of Criminology (ASC) conference in November of 2022 to present a portion of my research. There, I met several Ph.D. students, professors, and professionals within the field sharing the research they have worked on. I realized that this was something that I would be capable of and happily enjoy doing with my career.

What was the process of applying to Ph.D. programs like? Have you accepted an offer?

The process of applying to doctoral programs is similar to that of applying to graduate school. I was required to submit my resume, letters of recommendation, a writing sample, my Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, and a statement of purpose. After submitting my applications, some of the schools required an interview over Zoom. After deliberations were done following the interviews, the graduate director reaches out with an acceptance email and schedules a time for you to be flown out to see their campus, meet their faculty, and meet other accepted students. The trips were short- just a weekend- and you are able to ask questions about their program and get a feel of who you would potentially like to work with. After campus visits, you would be reached out with an official offer letter and are given a choice to accept or not. After being considered by a few schools, I have accepted an offer to attend the University of Nebraska in Omaha (UNO) in the fall. It was not an easy decision to come to. However, during my visit, the environment felt welcoming, close-knit, and a place that fosters student learning.

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Featuring CJ Graduate Student - Taylor Gonzales



Taylor Gonzales

Additionally, I was given the opportunity to work with Dr. Armstrong- the director of the school of criminology and criminal justice- on critical Department of Justice funded firearm research prior to my arrival in the fall.

What does your future look like after the completion of your Ph.D.?

My long-term goal is to expand my research interests further and conduct research that can provide meaningful policy implications. Having an additional background in psychology, some of my research interests include recidivism among justice-involved populations and corrections. Specifically, in the realm of criminal justice, I believe that evidence-based practice is necessary to accurately treat offenders. Given my experiences, I want to bridge the gap between research and practice by conducting research that has clear practice implications. Thus, furthering my education to earn a Ph.D. would allow me the opportunity to engage in research studies that could make a difference in the way that the criminal justice system operates. Being able to work on different projects with criminal justice faculty members has opened opportunities that I didn't know were available to my discipline. Additionally, I have enjoyed being able to share my passion for criminal justice and disseminate research to provide different perspectives to students.

Best Online Masters Program

Ranked #17 in Top Online Criminal Justice Master's Degrees for 2023

We are proud to share that New Mexico State University ranked a top school for online master's in criminal justice for 2023.

[NMSU Main-campus](#) is ranked #17 in Top Criminal Justice Master's Degrees for 2023.

New Mexico State University has been recognized as one of the best schools for online learning at the master's level by [Online Masters Degree](#) (OMD). NMSU's criminal justice programs earned top honors for overall quality, affordability, and commitment to student success.

A pair of New Mexico State University programs have been ranked in the top 50 on the U.S. News & World Report's Best Online Education Programs list offered by [U.S. National Universities](#). We are proud that the Criminal Justice Online Master's program tied for 43rd.



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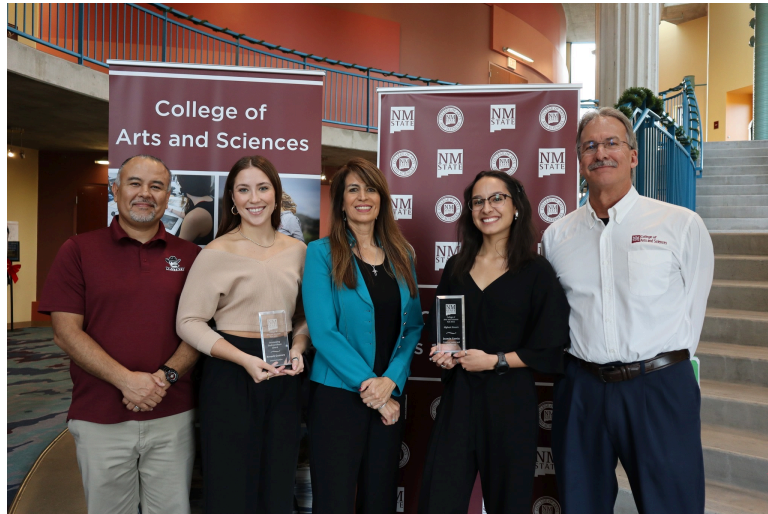
Congratulations to our Fall 2022 Student Award winners!

Outstanding Undergraduate Award

Nevaeh Guevara -
Criminal Justice

Highest Honors

Jazmin Garcia -
Criminal Justice and
Psychology



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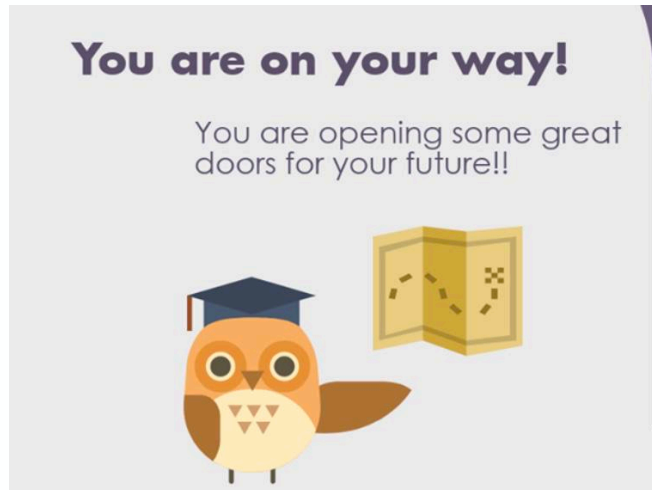
[CJ Instagram Page](#)

[CJ LinkedIn Page](#)

Masters Accelerated Program (MAP)

Opportunity for CJ Undergraduate Students

[Masters Accelerated Program \(MAP\)](#) is the chance to take up to 12 graduate credits (courses numbered CJUS 450 level and higher) during undergraduate studies that can apply towards a Master's degree.



Students must apply for the MAP program before taking the classes (nothing more than filling out a form).

Requirements

- Receive approval - fill out the MAP form (email marijad@nmsu.edu or cposadas@nmsu.edu)
- Must be a Junior or Senior with a minimum of 60 undergraduate credits
- Must have a minimum GPA of 3.0

The Benefits

- Cost - up to 12 credit hours of graduate courses are paid as undergrad courses
- Your Master's program duration - many students would need only 1 year to complete a Master's degree
- Take graduate level courses while still an undergrad
- Courses count as electives towards graduation with a bachelor's degree
- After you graduate with a bachelor's degree, these credits are applied to your Master's studies

CJ Faculty Certified by the American Council on Education in Effective College Instruction

Faculty members completed a two-semester-long course in Effective [Online Teaching Practices \(an online course\)](#) that led to a nationally recognized Certificate in Effective College Instruction endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE).

Obtaining this certification offers several benefits for our undergraduate and graduate CJ programs:

- **Quality Assurance:** Faculty with recognized credentials in effective online teaching practices can help ensure that the program meets high academic standards, resulting in better student learning outcomes.
- **Best Practices Implementation:** Faculty with this certification have demonstrated their proficiency in applying the latest pedagogical techniques, fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment for students.
- **Improved Student Satisfaction:** Certified faculty members are more likely to deliver a positive learning experience, leading to higher student satisfaction rates and better course evaluations.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Certified faculty members are skilled in applying the latest pedagogical techniques, which can enhance student comprehension, retention, and overall academic performance.
- **Personalized Learning:** Certified faculty members are better equipped to address diverse learning needs and styles, tailoring their approach to accommodate individual students and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.
- **Higher Retention Rates:** When students are satisfied with their learning experience, they are more likely to remain enrolled and complete their program, contributing to higher retention rates and overall program success.
- **Enhanced Employability:** Graduating from a program with certified faculty members can signal to potential employers that the student has received a high-quality education, potentially improving their employability and career prospects.

Certified faculty in Effective College Instruction:

[Dr. Hyunin Baek](#) (2021)

[Ida D'Antonio-Hangen](#) (2023)

[Marija Dimitrijevic](#) (2023)

[Dr. Saundra Trujillo](#) (2023)



Human Trafficking Conference, Spreading Awareness, and creating positive change in our Community

[The Humans for Humans](#) student group participated with their skits, and Jaco Booyens was a powerful speaker. He brings so much truth to the realities of sex trafficking and child exploitation.



[Humans 4 Humans student group](#) and students from Professor Ida's human trafficking class (CJUS 454) partnered up with NM Attorney General's Office and went to different businesses in Las Cruces and educated people about the realities of Human Trafficking and hung up posters and information on the number to call, if they need help.

Through their hard work and dedication, Human for Humans has been organizing events, workshops, and awareness campaigns to promote inclusivity, equity, and social justice.

As members of the community, we are grateful for the efforts of Humans for Humans and the positive impact they have had on our community.

Thank you, H4H, for all that you do!



Criminal Justice Department



Be Bold. Shape the Future.
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Criminal Justice



[Andreia Scarborough](#)
(our Administrative
Assistant)



[Alexis Renteria](#)
(student
worker/administrative
assistant)

Thank you Andreia and Alexis for taking care of student and faculty needs. Your personal touches and caring for each individual student is absolutely noticed.
Thank you both!

Please touch back to us and let us learn about your career and what you have done since you graduated.

Please send a short note or email briefly describing your careers. We might include these in future Newsletters or on our website. It would be nice for our alumni to hear from others and what they have been doing since they left NMSU.

Please check our [alumni success webpage](#)
[Newsletters page](#)
Connect with Us on [LinkedIn](#)

Please visit the [CJ Giving Page](#) to see how you can contribute to the future success of Criminal Justice Students.