

Message from the Department Head



[Dr. Carlos Posadas](#)
CJ Department Head

cposadas@nmsu.edu



As we get close to wrapping up another spring semester, I took some time to reflect on what this means to our department which was established in 1962. We know that it was established as a Police Science Department and has experienced its share of change over the last six decades. Our department evolved into a Department of Criminal Justice in the 1980s and its curriculum evolved from a systems focus to one that also included criminology, social justice, human rights, security technology, and emergency management. Throughout that time, thousands of students have come and gone through our program, and many have built good lives for themselves and their loved ones, in part, because of the power of education. My favorite part of this newsletter is reading about our alumni and all the wonderful work they have done and many continue to do. Throughout that time, our department has also experienced changes in leadership for various reasons.

This semester, it has been my privilege to serve as interim department head. I am happy to announce that on July 1, 2026, I will officially be the next department head. As I close out this spring semester, I am amazed that I am completing my 20th year as a faculty member here at NMSU. As some of you may know, I am a graduate of NMSU, class of 1998, majored in CJ, and completed a master's degree in CJ and my Ph.D. in Justice Studies from Arizona State University. It has been a journey that I never thought of taking when I was a student back in the 1990s. However, here I am, thanks to supportive former faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice like Dr. Jim Maupin, Dr. Larry Mays, the late Dr. Peter Gregware, Dr. Tom Winfree, Dr. Lisa Bond-Maupin, and Dr. Dennis Giever, who all offered support and encouragement at one point or another throughout my academic career. They all showed me the great impact that faculty make on students, and I have tried to do the same for my students over these past 20 years. During my time at NMSU as a faculty member, we have had students become law enforcement officers (local, state, and federal), attorneys, probation officers, correctional officers, social service providers, K-12 educators, university faculty, researchers, administrators, analysts, community advocates, business entrepreneurs, military personnel, etc., and I would like to think that our faculty continue to play a small role in helping our students accomplish their goals. We would love to hear from all of our Alumni who see this newsletter and I hope we can reach even more of our Alumni—please share widely. Please reach out, share with us what you have been up to and let us acknowledge and celebrate you and your accomplishments. I look forward to meeting and catching up with many of you and I encourage your feedback as we move ahead.

Best,
Carlos Posadas / cposadas@nmsu.edu / 575-646-3951

Graduate Student Spotlight: Melanie A. Velasco



Melanie A. Velasco
CJ Graduate
Student

We are proud to celebrate a major milestone for our graduate community!

On Friday, April 3rd, Melanie A. Velasco successfully defended her thesis, *A Meta-Ethnography of Labor Trafficking Among Agricultural Workers*. Her work highlights critical issues impacting vulnerable populations and reflects a strong commitment to research that makes a difference.

Melanie's thesis committee included Dr. Mari-Esther Edwards, Dr. Carlos Posadas, and Dr. Frannie Miller, whose mentorship and support helped guide this important work to completion.

Moments like these remind us of the impact our students are making through dedication, resilience, and a passion for advancing knowledge in criminal justice.

Congratulations, Melanie, on this incredible achievement!



Dr. Posadas, Dr. Miller, Velasco, Dr. Edwards



Melanie A. Velasco

Graduate Student Spotlight: Olivia Martinez



Olivia Martinez
CJ Graduate
Student

We are proud to celebrate another important milestone in our graduate community!

On Monday, April 6th at 12:00pm, Olivia Martinez successfully defended her thesis, *Race, Gender, Crime, and Media Representation*. Her research explores timely and impactful issues, contributing to important conversations at the intersection of justice, identity, and media.

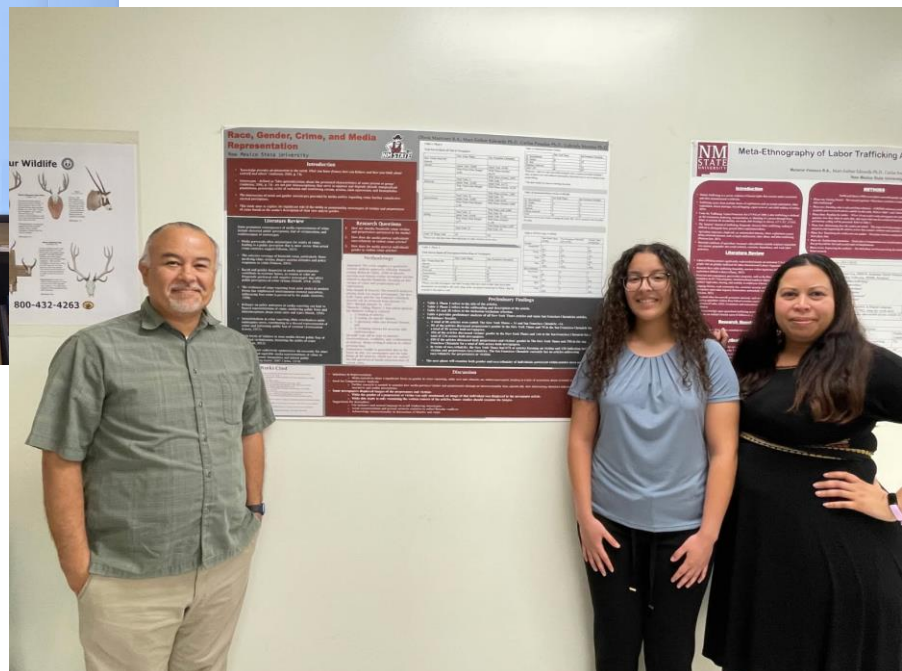
Olivia's thesis committee included Dr. Mari-Esther Edwards, Dr. Carlos Posadas, and Dr. Gabriela Moreno, whose mentorship and guidance supported her throughout this journey.

Moments like these highlight the meaningful work our students are doing and the impact they continue to make in the field of criminal justice.

Congratulations, Olivia, on this outstanding achievement!



Olivia Martinez



Dr. Posadas, Martinez, Dr. Edwards

Graduate Student Spotlight: Jonnieann Davis



Jonnieann Davis
CJ Graduate
Student

We are proud to highlight another meaningful achievement within our graduate community!

On Tuesday, April 7th at 8:30 AM, Jonnieann Davies successfully defended her thesis, *Where Were They? The Tragic Void of Guardianship in Mass School Shootings*. Her work examines critical gaps in guardianship and contributes to ongoing discussions surrounding prevention and public safety.

Jonnieann's thesis committee included Dr. Jessica Corey, Dr. Mari-Esther Edwards, and Dr. Holly Brause, whose mentorship and support were instrumental throughout her research journey.

The defense was held in the CJ Conference Room (Breland 128) and was open to students and faculty, reflecting the collaborative and engaged spirit of our department.

We are continually inspired by the impactful research our students pursue and the important conversations they help advance.

Congratulations, Jonnieann, on this significant accomplishment!



Jonnieann Davis

Faculty Research Spotlight: Dr. Hyunin Baek



[Dr. Hyunin Baek](#)
Associate Professor
h0baek01@nmsu.edu

We are proud to highlight the impactful scholarship of Dr. Hyunin Baek and colleagues, who recently published a peer-reviewed article examining the role of parent–child relationships in shaping stress and juvenile delinquency.

Their study, [Role of Parent–Child Relationship on Stressors and Juvenile Delinquency, published in International Criminology](#), explores how family dynamics influence youth outcomes. Drawing on a large sample of over 6,600 adolescents, the research finds that stress is a significant predictor of both negative emotions and delinquent behavior. Importantly, strong parent–child relationships can serve as a protective factor by reducing the emotional impact of certain stressors, particularly those related to peer experiences.

This work contributes to ongoing efforts to better understand the social and emotional factors that shape juvenile behavior and highlights the importance of supportive family relationships in prevention and intervention strategies.

Congratulations to Dr. Baek and collaborators on this important contribution to the field of criminal justice!

Recruiting/Outreach



Dr. Carlos Posadas, Dr. Emily Spivery, Professors Jesse Williams and Ida Curtis made a meaningful impact through their participation in the Aggie Next Step College Experience during the 2025–2026 academic year.

Dr. Posadas delivered two presentations reaching 40 participants, while the Criminal Justice Department contributed nine presentations engaging 163 youth and adults.

This outreach helped inspire the next generation and students reported increased confidence in attending college, with many indicating they are more likely to pursue education at NMSU or DACC.

A powerful example of how our faculty and department continue to make a lasting difference beyond the classroom.



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April 22, 2026

Good afternoon Dr. Posadas,

We have wrapped up the Aggie Next Step College Experience campus visits for the 2025–2026 school year and would like to thank you for your support in making it such a successful year. In total, we hosted 11 visits serving 322 participants.

Your participation and support truly make a difference in these students' lives, and we are grateful for the time and resources you dedicate to this program. As part of our outreach and service reporting, your involvement included two presentations reaching 40 youth and adults. As a department Criminal Justice provided nine presentations reaching 163 youth and adults.

After participating in the Aggie Next Step campus experience, students showed increased confidence and interest in attending college. The percentage of students planning to attend college rose from 73% to 79%, and positive feelings about college increased from 49% to 57%. Additionally, 85% of students reported being more likely to attend NMSU or DACC, 49% indicated that their career interests changed due to their experience, and 75% felt better prepared to understand and pursue their educational and career goals.

More importantly, students and teachers shared powerful feedback about their experience:

"It changed my view of college. I want to go to college even more now."

"I think that NMSU really changed my career choices because I learned a lot more about all the other careers there are to choose from."

Career Connection for Students: Meet the Professionals

This spring, our Criminal Justice students had the opportunity to connect with outstanding professionals across the field through our **Criminal Justice Connections: Meet the Professionals virtual** series. Held monthly from January through April, these interactive sessions gave students direct access to real-world insights, career pathways, and meaningful networking opportunities.

We kicked off the series on **January 27 with Jeremy Story, Chief of the Las Cruces Police Department** and NMSU Criminal Justice alumnus ('12), who shared his career journey and leadership experience in law enforcement.

In February, students heard from three **Tulsa Police Department officers**—all proud NMSU alumni: Ofc. Troy Honeycutt (CJ '17), Ofc. Wyatt Greene (MCJ '23), and Ofc. Provencio Miguel (CJ '17). They discussed their roles, career progression, and highlighted the unique Tulsa Police–NMSU partnership, which allows students to complete their final 15 credits while attending the academy.

Our March session featured **New Mexico State Police Chief Troy Weisler and Captain Jacob P. Garcia**, who offered valuable perspectives on policing, leadership, and public service at the state level.

We concluded the series in April with **Silvia Delgado and Brett Barnes, Assistant United States Attorneys for the District of New Mexico**. They provided insight into federal prosecution, legal careers, and pathways into public service, with Brett Barnes also sharing his experience as a U.S. Army Reserve judge advocate.

Across all sessions, students engaged in thoughtful discussions, asked questions, and gained a deeper understanding of the diverse opportunities within criminal justice. These events continue to strengthen the connection between classroom learning and real-world practice.

Thank you to all of our speakers for inspiring and guiding the next generation of criminal justice professionals!

The Federal Bureau of Prisons is now hiring Correctional Officers with sign-on bonuses up to \$49K.

This is a great opportunity to gain hands-on experience, build a federal career, and make a real impact in the field.

Learn more and apply: careers.bop.gov

Questions? Reach out directly:

gx2baker@bop.gov

| (919) 575-3900 ext. 5089

Take the next step in your CJ career.

Stay connected—follow us on social media for the latest event updates:

[CJ Facebook Page](#)

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BUREAU OF PRISONS
NOW HIRING

SIGN ON BONUS UP TO 49K

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(919) 575-3900 EXT.5089



Federal Bureau of Prisons
Now Recruiting Correctional Officers
careers.bop.gov



The advertisement features a group of five correctional officers in uniform standing in a line. The background is a light blue sky with a white fence. The text is in bold, sans-serif fonts, with the main title in orange and blue. Contact information and a QR code are provided for applicants.

CJ Faculty Development – AI Teaching Institute

This spring, Criminal Justice faculty members Marija Dimitrijevic, Jesse Williams, and Dr. Jessica Corey participated in the Virtual AI Teaching Institute, continuing the department’s commitment to innovative and student-centered learning.

The institute focused on the state of AI today, its evolving role in higher education, and how this transformative technology can be used to improve teaching and learning. As course design and instruction continue to evolve, AI presents both challenges and opportunities for faculty and students. The goal of the institute was to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to confidently incorporate AI into teaching, research, and everyday academic workflows.

Through hands-on sessions and collaborative discussions, faculty explored practical strategies for integrating AI into their courses: enhancing student engagement, supporting critical thinking, and guiding students in the responsible and ethical use of these tools.

This experience reflects the CJ Department’s ongoing dedication to staying current with emerging technologies and preparing students with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

CJ FACULTY DEVELOPMENT
AI TEACHING INSTITUTE

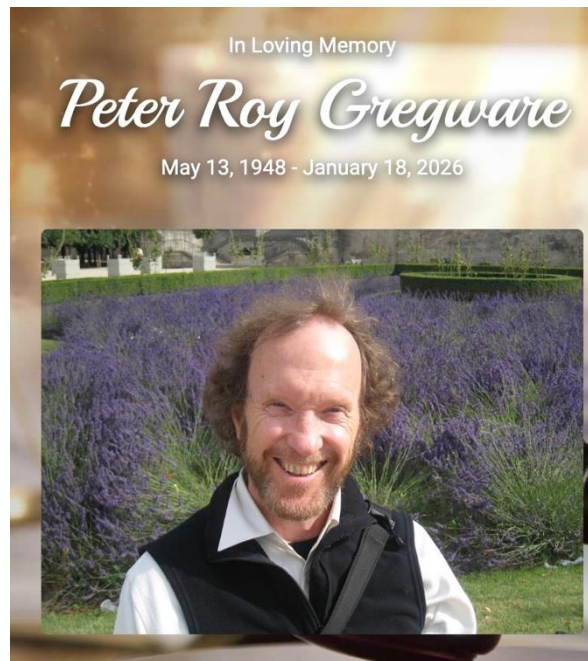
Innovating Today. Inspiring Tomorrow.

This spring, CJ faculty members **Marija Dimitrijevic**, **Jesse Williams**, and **Dr. Jessica Corey** attended the Virtual AI Teaching Institute to strengthen their teaching with the power of AI.

- EXPLORING THE STATE OF AI**
Examined the state of AI today and its evolving role in higher education.
- EMPOWERING EDUCATORS**
Gained knowledge and tools to confidently incorporate AI into teaching, research, and daily workflows.
- ENHANCING LEARNING**
Discovered practical strategies to boost student engagement, critical thinking, and ethical AI use.
- COMMITTED TO INNOVATION**
Equipping our faculty—and our students—to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Preparing our students. Advancing our profession. *Embracing the future.*

In Memoriam: Dr. Peter Gregware, Emeritus Faculty



It is with deep sadness that the NMSU Criminal Justice Department shares the passing of our former Department Head and valued colleague, Dr. Peter Gregware.

Dr. Gregware served as an Associate Professor, Department Head of Criminal Justice, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences. A dedicated scholar and educator, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholar Award in 2011, through which he taught at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. He also contributed to the NMSU Honors Program and advanced the field through his research on justice and law as mechanisms of social control. His scholarly work included numerous publications, as well as authorship and co-editorship of the legal reader *Courts & Justice*.

Throughout his career, Dr. Gregware was recognized for excellence in teaching, receiving both the Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award and the Patricia Christmore Faculty Teaching Award. He retired from NMSU in 2012.

Beyond his many accomplishments, Dr. Gregware will be remembered most for his leadership marked by kindness, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to others. His impact continues through the students he supported, the colleagues he mentored, and the department he helped shape.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. Those who wish to learn more are invited to view and share the obituary provided by his family.

We honor Dr. Gregware's legacy by continuing the work he valued—educating with purpose, leading with integrity, and serving our students with compassion.

CJ Online Master's Program Ranked

NMSU Global leads region in 2026 U.S. News Best Online Programs rankings

Release Date: 28 Jan 2026



New Mexico State University Global Campus just landed among the nation's top schools in the newly released 2026 U.S. News & World Report Best Online Programs rankings, leading peer institutions in our region for Best Online Bachelor's Programs overall.

We are proud of the national recognition for our CJ community: NMSU [Global's online master's in Criminal Justice ranked #44 \(tied\) in the country](#), alongside strong national placements across other graduate programs as well. Huge shoutout to our CJ faculty, staff, and students!

Online Programs Overview

New Mexico State University's online programs are among more than 1,800 programs surveyed by U.S. News. Only regionally accredited institutions whose programs are offered mostly or entirely online were evaluated. Learn more about the [online programs rankings methodology](#).

Online Programs Rankings

🏆 #44 in Best Online Master's in Criminal Justice Programs (tie)

🏆 #69 in Best Online Bachelor's Programs (tie)

🏆 #45 in Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans (tie)

🏆 #73 in Best Online Bachelor's in Business Programs (tie)

🏆 #19 in Best Online Bachelor's in Psychology Programs (tie)

🏆 #79 in Best Online Master's in Information Technology Programs

CJ Program Highlights: Human Rights Minor, Microcredentials, VR Courses

The Criminal Justice Department launched the Minor in Human Rights in Fall 2025. The program includes eight newly developed courses that examine human rights issues across cultures, systems, and institutions.

The very first course, HMRT 2110G: Introduction to Human Rights serves as the gateway to the minor. This Gen Ed course is open to all students and is a great way to start engaging with increasingly vital topics in today's world.

For more information, please contact Dr. Nicholas Natividad at ndn@nmsu.edu

Criminal Justice faculty developed two fully online, self-paced micro-credentials designed for professionals and the public: human trafficking, report writing for law enforcement, and human rights. Browse online: <https://nmsuondemand.nmsu.edu/>

VR in Learning: CJUS 424 (Forensics) and CJUS 416 (Drugs) as VR-enhanced courses, providing students with immersive, hands-on learning experiences that bring real-world criminal justice scenarios to life.

NM STATE GLOBAL CAMPUS Login

Report Writing for Law Enforcement


Course

\$99

Self-paced

[Report Writing for Law Enforcement Badge available](#)

\$99 Enroll



About This Course

NM STATE GLOBAL CAMPUS

This course equips law enforcement professionals with the skills to produce clear, accurate, and professional written documentation essential for investigations and legal proceedings. Participants will learn the importance of effective report writing, proper grammar, and sentence structure to create incident reports, affidavits,


CJUS 416

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH AND DRUG USE

MS2 • SPRING 2026 • ONLINE COURSE

Understanding global challenges. Exploring real-world solutions.

Our first VR orientation is this week—students are gearing up for an immersive semester ahead!



NEW

MINOR IN HUMAN RIGHTS

ON CAMPUS & 100% ONLINE

Humans for Humans (H4H) Student Organization

NMSU's Criminal Justice [Humans 4 Humans](#) student group presented at fraternity/sorority, organization and educated them on the realities of the sex trafficking industries: prostitution, stripping clubs, and pornography.

Please get in touch with President: Samara Nunez: at snunez03@nmsu.edu to join this incredible, inspiring group of students and follow them on [Instagram](#).

Thank you, Humans for Humans (H4H) Student Organization, for spreading awareness about human trafficking.





[Andreia Jaramillo-Nellist](#)

Administrative Assistant

Criminal Justice Spotlight

Andreia Jaramillo-Nellist

Administrative Assistant, Department of Criminal Justice

Andreia has a remarkable way of making every day in our department feel a little brighter. She brings a genuine warmth, positivity, and quiet confidence to everything she does. No matter how busy things get (and they often do), Andreia remains calm, kind, inspired and focused on solutions, creating a steady and reassuring presence for everyone around her.

She supports faculty and staff with thoughtfulness and efficiency, but it is her connection with students that stands out most. She creates an environment where everyone feel welcomed and encouraged to succeed.

In many ways, she represents the heart of our department—bringing people together, lifting others up, and reminding us of the impact that dedication and empathy can have in higher education.

Thank you, Andreia, for everything you do for our students, faculty, and community.

Your personal touch, your attention to each individual, and your commitment to excellence do not go unnoticed. You are truly an essential part of NMSU and the Department of Criminal Justice.

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Criminal Justice Department



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



[Andreia Jaramillo-Nellist](#)
(Administrative Assistant)



Liz Oquendo
(student work/administrative assistant)

Thank you Andreia and Liz 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](#) - **Scholarships** to see how you can contribute to the future success of Criminal Justice Students.