

**Educating Justice:
Postsecondary Education in the Justice Disciplines**

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Introduction

The essays in the fourth volume of *The Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice Research* reflect upon and examine critically the justice disciplines in Canada. In using this term, we refer to stand-alone postsecondary university degree programs and university research centres that are variously titled criminal justice, justice studies, police studies, as well as related programs such as law and security; indigenous people and law; criminal policy management; human justice; youth justice; community, crime and social justice; justice and public safety; indigenous people and justice and the like. The term ‘justice disciplines’ encompasses several scholarly perspectives that focus on aspects of crime and criminal justice and draws inspiration from John Crank’s (2003) argument that the problematic of justice itself ought to be the unifying concept at the heart of our scholarly endeavors. Thus, no matter what department we find ourselves in, and despite the challenges in defining justice, we are united by a commitment to “a broader, more open-ended investigation into the nature of justice itself” (Crank 2003: 14). We present this collection of essays as an inclusive dialogue on the state of the justice disciplines in Canada, reflecting critically on our collective history while identifying some of the challenges that we face as university educators. This thematic issue of *The Annual Review* creates a record of the development of justice studies in Canada, which can serve as a source of first resort for those wishing to examine issues related to the proliferation of the justice disciplines.

This current volume of *The Annual Review* is published at a significant time in the history of the justice disciplines in Canada. Across the nation, student interest in studying aspects of justice has never been higher. Anecdotally, our colleagues in postsecondary programs across Canada report strong and growing student demand for university courses and degrees in the justice disciplines. At our own institution, the demand for seats in our courses vastly outstrips supply, and we find ourselves with an enviable number of majors. However, the overall picture in the liberal arts is not nearly as rosy. We are keenly aware that our program is sustaining a long period of growth at the same time that many other programs in the social sciences and humanities are seeing enrollments decline.

Universities generally are moving toward an ethos of corporatization (Côté and Allahar 2011; Chan and Fisher 2008; Gorkoff 2014; Jochelson, Kohm and Weinrath 2012; Polster and Newson 2010; Slaughter and Rhodes 2004; Turk 2000) driven by the political currents of neo-liberalism and the economics of fiscal restraint. Universities and academic units within the institution are being told to do more with less, to fundraise, and to be entrepreneurial in tapping new markets for our teaching the research services. Provincial and federal governments are attempting to shift the focus of university research toward commercializable endeavors and refashion our teaching mission as one of applied learning and job training. At the same time, the conservative politics of law and order ensure that the organs of the criminal justice apparatus remain relatively well funded in these austere economic times even as funding for research has become scarcer. Therefore, careers in the justice field seem a good bet for students, parents, as well as advanced education ministers who see our programs as the gateway to a viable career and middle class prosperity. It remains an open question whether the justice disciplines can deliver all that is imagined by our students, by governments, and by university administrators who see us as significant sources of revenue. Nevertheless, we find ourselves well-suited to weather these difficult times

in postsecondary education. It would appear that the time is right to reflect upon our relatively privileged position in the academy and to analyze where we came from as well as where we might go as a discipline in ascendancy in most regions of Canada.

No Respect

Craig Hemmens (2002) wryly noted that justice studies faculty often complain that we are “the Rodney Dangerfield of the social sciences” (p. 12). We often feel that we do not get the respect we deserve from our colleagues in other academic programs. Hemmens (2002) continues:

...criminal justice has been misperceived and mistreated by other disciplines, and... much of the blame for this poor treatment can be attributed to the perception of criminal justice as at best only a quasi-academic field of study and at worst merely a training ground for criminal justice personnel (p. 11).

Justice studies programs have long been criticized for being too closely aligned with the agencies of the criminal justice system, and have been described by detractors as a commodified, career-focused approach to education (e.g. Farrell and Koch 1995; Huey 2011), a protective service rather than a social science (e.g. Frauley 2005), handmaidens of the state (e.g. Menzies and Chunn 1999; Chunn and Menzies 2006), and, at the extreme, the epitome of anti-intellectualism (e.g. Farrell and Koch 1995). To be sure, there is tremendous diversity in the Canadian postsecondary landscape. No doubt, there remain heavily applied, justice-themed career training programs offered through community and technical colleges in most provinces, and indeed through the continuing education arm of public universities like the University of Winnipeg. These diploma and certificate programs conform in some senses to the stereotypes perpetuated by the detractors noted above. Indeed, our own university’s Professional, Applied and Continuing Education (PACE) division offers a “Police Preparation Program” including instruction in

physical fitness and other technical training. We draw a sharp distinction between these programs and the academic programs nested in traditional liberal arts faculties in Canadian universities and recognize the difference of programs in the Canadian landscape of post secondary education.

While acknowledging that great diversity characterizes the undergraduate and graduate degrees found in justice studies programs at universities across the country, it is clear to us that the time has come to more systematically assess the state of the justice disciplines in Canada. Some justice studies programs found today at Canadian universities emerged from earlier applied college programming (Jochelson *et al.* 2013) while others differ little from a traditional liberal arts degree (Gorkoff 2014). As colleges evolved into degree granting universities, vestiges from the previous applied programs have in some cases remained. Many university programs place strong emphasis on practica and student field placements within the justice system, while at the same time hiring young faculty members with doctorates who are expected to establish a research and publishing agenda. John Crank (2003: xx) has noted similar shifts in the United States and has argued that many American criminal justice programs “continue to carry the community college mandate” that characterized the initial growth of the field in the 1960s. Many programs rely on local justice professionals to teach courses part time in their areas of expertise while decisions around hiring and curriculum are organized “normatively” around the branches of the criminal justice system: cops, courts and corrections. Yet, the growth of American justice studies programs in recent years, including more than 100 MA programs, has spurred a conversation about the state of field, prompting Crank (2003) to call for the abandonment of normative thinking and move to a new “way to think about the enterprise of justice that will capture its full potential” (p. xxi). We believe that similar conversations are just now beginning to take place in Canadian justice studies programs. Therefore, we present this thematic issue of *The Annual Review* as a scholarly venue to take stock of our past and present and to imagine where we may be headed in the future.

From Self-Reflection to National Dialogue

As with many academic journeys, our inspiration sprung from our own unique story. The CJ program at the University of Winnipeg, while not evolving from a college diploma, has seen considerable changes since the program moved to full departmental status in 2005 (Jochelson *et al.* 2013). Over the past decade, we developed a distinct BA curriculum that has moved away from the normative organization of the criminal justice system and established justice as a central problematic, with required courses in theory, methods and criminal law. Soon after gaining departmental status, we launched a BA Honours degree with advanced courses in justice studies that provide students with more rigorous academic preparation for further graduate training in the justice disciplines. The development of the Honours program was the first impetus for us to examine the nature of our academic mission in a similar vein to Crank's (2003) reassessment of American justice studies. As we now stand at a crossroads contemplating a move into a graduate program, we are further inspired to take stock of our discipline by inviting reflection, debate and scholarly analysis from our colleagues across Canada. Thus, we organized our annual spring conference around the theme of "Educating Justice" and issued a special call for scholarly articles on justice education, professional reflections on the development of justice studies programs, and pedagogical explorations of justice education inside, outside, and beyond the university context. The present volume of *The Annual Review* is the end result of this scholarly exchange. The conversation is fully national, with contributions from justice studies scholars and educators from Newfoundland to British Columbia represented. We sincerely hope that this will only be the beginning of a national dialogue on these issues.

Organization of the Volume

The first part of the volume comprises two articles that explore the history of the justice disciplines in Canada through unique case studies. The first article, by Curt Griffiths and

Ted Palys, traces a detailed history of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University (SFU), the leading centre for Criminological and Criminal Justice research and teaching in Western Canada; one of four Canadian university centres of Criminology developed through the 1960s and 1970s. SFU exerts a strong influence regionally and nationally and its development provides a case study through which to consider broader questions about the state of the justice disciplines in Canada such as: What is an appropriate balance between applied and theoretical aspects of an academic program in justice studies?; and How should academic departments position themselves in relation to the state apparatus of criminal justice? By reflecting on the history of their institutional context, Griffiths and Palys shed light on the key challenges facing justice studies today.

Sean Parys provides an altogether different sort of case study through which to analyze the development of the justice disciplines in Canada. Parys traces the collected knowledge of the justice disciplines by analyzing the content of the first 25 years of the *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* (CJCCJ), examining shifts in the way the problem of crime is conceptualized by examining broader social, political, and economic currents in Canadian society over the same time period (1958-1983). The CJCCJ is a rich archive of the ideas and actors that shaped the study and practice of justice in the early to mid-postwar period in Canada. Parys notes a distinct shift in the role of practitioners in the production of justice knowledge and a disciplinary movement away from what he terms “correctionalism” in the early postwar period, to a focus on prevention and institutional analyses of justice by the early 1980s.

Part Two of the thematic issue comprises reflections from current and former chairs, heads, and coordinators of justice studies programs and departments from across Canada. We invited former and current department heads and program coordinators to reflect on the development of their own programs, the issues and challenges they have faced, and in

some cases, the demise or evolution of their programs. Since justice studies is a young academic enterprise in Canada, we had a unique opportunity to collect firsthand accounts of the development of the discipline from the key actors who were involved through this recent history. For a variety of reasons, we were not able to include reflections or commentary from all justice studies programs in Canada, and the contributions we did receive take a variety of approaches to the task, ranging from highly personalized historical reflections, to more detached and empirical overviews of the programs. Nevertheless, we have assembled a rich variety of contributions from across the country that identify many common themes and challenges facing the postsecondary study of justice in Canada. While some institutional contexts are unique – for example Anne Morris and Sharon Barter Trenholm describe the Police Studies program at Memorial University where undergraduate students and recruits of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary learn side by side on campus – the core issues are very much shared. The relationship between academic criminal justice programs and the agencies of criminal justice, the tension between applied and theoretical education, and the fight for respect and legitimacy from academic peers animates many of these submissions. R.S. Ratner, Professor Emeritus from the University of British Columbia is the only contributor reflecting on the outright demise of a Canadian justice studies program. He reflects on his experiences teaching in the UBC School of Continuing Education's Criminology Certificate Program, which was developed for the benefit of service personnel in law enforcement, corrections, and related occupational fields. The UBC program ran from 1969 to 1982, but was largely made redundant by the development of the School of Criminology at SFU in 1975. Nevertheless, the experiences within this program, detailed by Ratner, foreshadow similar themes that our other contributors have identified in the more recent histories of their programs. Thus, the more recent development of justice studies programs at Ryerson, Winnipeg, Regina, Mount Royal, Victoria, and Royal Roads must be read in the broader historical context of the earlier experiences of UBC.

The third part of the volume focuses on justice education inside and beyond the university. Perhaps more so than other academic areas, justice education requires engagement with local communities that can be seen to include prisoners and former prisoners trying to reenter society. Above, it was noted that Crank (2003) has argued that many justice studies programs have maintained their earlier community college missions, including a commitment to service in the broader community. This may in part explain why for many educators ‘doing justice’ means bringing education to society’s most marginal members inside prisons and halfway houses as well as in the university. Reflections by Sarah Buhler, Priscilla Settee, and Nancy Van Styvendale of the University of Saskatchewan and Judith Harris and Jaqueline McLeod Rogers of the University of Winnipeg candidly outline the rewards and challenges of meeting the education needs of traditional students as well as learners in correctional settings. And while teaching justice requires that we sometimes move across physical settings – from the classroom to the community – it also frequently requires that we transgress traditional disciplinary boundaries. Reflections by Richard Jochelson from the University of Winnipeg and Courtney Waid-Lindberg from Northern State University offer personal observations from their own cross-disciplinary approaches to teaching justice in undergraduate settings. A commitment to teaching justice requires engagement with foundational disciplines such as law, sociology and political science. However, both Jochelson and Waid-Lindberg demonstrate that the commitment to justice is what provides our unique perspective and allows educators in the justice disciplines to bring new insights to these foundational subjects. Teaching justice through the lens of law and sociology requires what Crank (2003) might call the justice imagination.

We would like to thank the contributors to this volume as well as those who took part in the conversation at “Educating Justice” in May 2014. It is our hope that this volume is only the beginning of a broad national dialogue on postsecondary justice education in Canada.

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Winnipeg, September 2014*

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