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UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH • COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES

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Pictured above: Courtney Jerioski
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CGS Administration of Justice Major Marks 45th Anniversary



Lee Weinberg

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the administration of justice major in the University of Pittsburgh College of General Studies (CGS). While the curriculum of the administration of justice program has evolved over the years, many key components, such as hands-on experience through internships and knowledgeable instructors with experience in the field, have remained constant since the establishment of the major in 1971.

The effort to offer the administration of justice major was spurred by faculty member and Pitt alumnus John F. "Jack" Karns, who at the time was teaching criminology classes in Pitt's Department of Sociology. Karns taught in the administration of justice program until his death in 2004.

"We always thought that instructors with practical experience brought a unique dimension to the academic study of crime and criminal justice."

Lee Weinberg, administration of justice program director

One of the earliest faculty members Karns hired was current Pitt Graduate School of Public and International Affairs associate professor Lee Weinberg, who began teaching in the program in 1973 while he was a student in Pitt's School of Law. Upon graduating from law school, Weinberg was hired as a full-time faculty member in the emerging administration of justice program. Today, Weinberg serves as the program's director.

In its early years, the administration of justice curriculum focused primarily on law enforcement and corrections. That was partly driven by the high numbers of law enforcement and corrections officers who were beginning to pursue undergraduate degrees with the help of funds provided by the Law Enforcement Education Program, which aims to support educational programs for the law enforcement community.

Today, law enforcement is still the most popular of the four tracks offered within the major. But current students also can choose to specialize in forensics, cybercrime, or adult and juvenile corrections.

Under Weinberg's leadership, the curriculum has shifted to keep pace with trends and emerging technologies in the field of criminal justice.

"We've tried to keep up with current issues and to expand the topics we offer as society has increasingly paid attention to these things," says Weinberg, who speculates that the presence of criminal and legal issues in the news and in television programming have driven the administration of justice program's steady popularity.

"Cybercrime wasn't even thought of when Jack Karns started this program," Weinberg says, "and 9/11 changed everything in terms of how we discuss terrorism." He adds that the average police department's forensics capabilities have advanced remarkably since the program's inception.

Forty-five years and close to 3,000 graduates later, the administration of justice major is among the largest and most popular in CGS. According to records from the 2015–16 academic year, 265 students were pursuing the major.

Majors can and often do add minors within CGS—legal studies is a popular choice—or pursue a double major, accruing credits toward their second major within CGS or in another Pitt school.

And since 1999, an administration of justice minor also has been available to students from other schools at the University. It's been a very popular option, says Boryana Dobreva, director of academic programs for CGS, with 71 percent of the students minoring in administration of justice in the last five years coming from the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

Just as many of the program's early students were working police and corrections officers, many of today's majors are nontraditional students, says Dobreva, with many working full-time jobs or caring for children. That has spurred the program to increase its options for online classes over the past four years, providing students with the flexibility to take courses according to their own schedules.

According to a recent alumni survey, administration of justice majors have gone on to serve as U.S. military police officers, administrative investigators, counterintelligence agents, federal police officers, and investigators for the City of Pittsburgh, among other careers.

Commander Shawn Ellies of the University of Pittsburgh Police Department is a Pitt alumnus who maintains an active connection with the administration of justice program by teaching students.

Ellies is a good example of one of the major's long-standing strengths, says Dobreva. Many instructors in the program are working or retired professionals, representing expertise in positions ranging from law enforcement officers, FBI agents,

lawyers, and district attorneys to medical examiners, judges, a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice, and probation officers.

"We always thought that instructors with practical experience brought a unique dimension to the academic study of crime and criminal justice," says Weinberg.

"Students value that experience very highly," adds Dobreva.

Another highly valued aspect of the program is the internship that is required for all students, who receive assistance from CGS in finding an appropriate placement. Majors have the opportunity to gain experience in every facet of the criminal justice system, from juvenile courts and corrections facilities to police departments and courtrooms.

"Internships are where you actually see how the criminal justice system works," says Weinberg.

To complement their internship experience, each student takes a required internship course that draws a link between the student's hands-on and classroom experiences.

Dobreva describes the internship as a crucial part of engaging with the community and also points to the various study abroad opportunities available to administration of justice majors. For example, in summer 2017, students will have a chance to participate in a three-week global seminar in London, England, on wrongful convictions and gain a broader picture of the world of criminal justice.

"We can't stay local anymore," she says. "We have to think beyond that."



Pictured above is Jack Karns in the June 1976 issue of the CGS newsletter Night Times.

MESSAGE FROM THE CGS STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

It's Okay Not to Know



I wonder how many reading this have experienced a major change while in school. I do not mean a physical alteration of self or environment but rather a switch in one's educational path.

When I first enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh, I thought I was going to graduate in four years and become an engineer. Looking back now, I realize that I did not know much at all about engineering, let alone the kind of engineer I wanted to become. Luckily, with the assistance of my College of General Studies (CGS) advisor, I realized sooner rather than later that engineering was not going to be a career path that was right for me. Unfortunately, my switch to a business major did not go any better. With two failed majors and a lack of direction, I worried for a while that I would never find the right path for me. As clichéd as it sounds, it was not until I stopped worrying so much about searching for the right major and decided to let it find me that I started to enjoy school more.

My advisor explained to me the importance of making the most out of all of my core classes—history, art, English, and even math—to see what classes I did well in and which ones interested me the most. Finally, during one of my English classes, I found myself more engaged and interested in the topics my professor was teaching. We were discussing journalists, blogging, and social media.

After discussing my interests with my advisor, I switched to a media and professional communications major and began taking classes that pertain to writing for the public, communication ethics, and media laws. To me, this was just another reminder of the importance of our academic advisors and how crucial they are to student success.

I have never been happier, and now I can say with full confidence that I will have a successful future in a career that I enjoy. For that, I am eternally grateful to the University of Pittsburgh.

Jessica Sevcik

President, CGS Student Government

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Scholarship Provides a Stepping Stone

Felicia Snyder, a media and professional communications major with a minor in legal studies pursuing a Certificate in Corporate and Community Relations, was awarded a 2016 Summer Commonwealth Scholarship. The scholarship covers the cost of tuition and fees for a student to take three credits of summer courses.

"I was absolutely thrilled when I received the news about the scholarship. For me, it was more than just not having to pay for a class; it was a much-needed stepping stone toward my goal without the added financial burden on me and my family," says Snyder.

In 2011, Snyder graduated from the Community College of Allegheny County with an associate's degree in chemistry. Her career path took a turn when she rather serendipitously found a temporary position in the business center at Reed Smith LLP, a global law firm headquartered in Pittsburgh. After one month, Snyder was hired full time and continued to work in the business center for about two years before moving into a position in the firm's marketing department. The move to marketing is what sparked her desire to pursue a bachelor's degree in the field of communications.

On the recommendation of a friend who works at the University of Pittsburgh, Snyder decided to see what the College of General Studies had to offer.



"I met with Melvin Watkins, who became my academic advisor, and together we came up with a great plan and course of action for me," says Snyder.

With her job, her studies, and raising her 10-year-old daughter, Snyder doesn't have much free time. She does, however, choose to fill her time with positive-based activities such as participating in CGS Student Government and serving as president of the parent/teacher association at her daughter's elementary school.

When asked what advice she can offer her fellow CGS students, she replies, "Managing time is really important—whether it's with regard to your classes, school assignments, or life assignments—as is having the support of your friends and family. You also need to accept the fact that it's okay to need help."

To help students like Snyder, visit give.to.pitt.edu/givecgs.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Administration of Justice Program Expands Student's Career Options

Courtney Jerioski is a senior administration of justice major with a minor in legal studies.

While positions in the field of criminal justice have long appealed to her, the College of General Studies (CGS) administration of justice program has helped Jerioski to refine those plans and expand her options. Currently, she hopes to work in the justice system as a criminal prosecutor before ultimately working in the field as a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent.

"The program has really fit me as I've grown as a person," Jerioski says. "I've always wanted to promote justice and make things right, and I've come to see that I can do that in the courtroom."

The decision to minor in legal studies has broadened Jerioski's options, introducing her to corners of the criminal justice system she hadn't considered. She currently plans to attend law school after taking a year to work in her field following her graduation in the spring.

As a high school student in Erie, Pa., Jerioski considered psychology and teaching as future professions before an inspirational high school teacher sparked her interest in the law by initiating frequent class discussions of current events.

Jerioski has pursued that interest, sharpening it with the help of the administration of justice program's experienced teachers. Internships, a central part of the program, have allowed her to gain crucial real-world experience.

She currently is interning with the Pennsylvania attorney general's office in downtown Pittsburgh, working in the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

"It's a very good experience," Jerioski says. She is pursuing an internship for the spring 2017 term in the attorney general's criminal investigation department. "I know that I'm 100 percent interested in criminal law."

Jerioski's extracurricular activities also have informed her future plans. As a member of Students Conquering Cold Cases, led by CGS instructor and former police officer Ron Freeman, Jerioski and her classmates pore over cold case files provided by regional police, working to uncover new information and clues pertaining to unsolved crimes. In addition to providing Jerioski and other students with hands-on experience, the group hosts guest speakers from across the criminal justice spectrum, from detectives and judges to handwriting analysts.

"Being part of the group has really informed my plans, but it's also been a lot of fun," Jerioski says.



NEWS IN BRIEF

McCarl Center Expands Tutoring Services to Enhance Student Success

The College of General Studies' McCarl Center for Nontraditional Student Success now offers CGS students and student veterans one-on-one consultations and tutoring sessions to help with all types of writing assignments.

Writing tutors Liberty "Libby" Ferda and April Flynn will meet with a student in person at the McCarl Center, via telephone, or via Skype or an asynchronous online consultation.

A typical session begins with a simple discussion. Some students need guidance on how to organize their thoughts or how to divide an assignment into manageable parts. Then, after the student writes the paper, he or she and the tutor read it aloud and talk about it. This way, the writer gets to hear the rhythm and tone of his or her writing.

"When students work with Libby and April, they get an added bonus of receiving a teacher's perspective on their work, because both are instructors in the Department of English," says Adam Robinson, director of the McCarl Center.

As one CGS student notes, working with a writing tutor "helped me to organize my thoughts within the parameters set by my professor. I wish I would have found this help earlier."

On the math side, Katie Smith, a grad student in the Department of Mathematics, tutors students in any undergraduate math course, from College Algebra up to Calculus III or Statistics. She conducts both one-on-one and small-group sessions. During the group sessions, Smith walks around the room, creating a free-flowing atmosphere in which she often helps students to tutor each other.



CGS student Julia Pines discusses a project with her tutor, Libby Ferda.

Besides the obvious benefits that tutoring provides to students, the sessions offer a good connection to campus for many nontraditional students. It's a reason for them to come in early, stay later, or spend a free period in the McCarl Center.

Robinson and his staff, who view their work as extremely rewarding, strive to accomplish three main goals through their tutoring services.

"First, we want students to get help on their immediate projects. We teach good principles of organization and offer the best advice possible to enable students to go home and complete the project on their own.

"Second, we aim to build confidence in students. The more they practice and put in the effort, the better student and employee they will be.

"Third, we focus on long-term learning. We give students a set of tools that show them ways of thinking for future projects. We also give them questions that they can ask themselves to help them complete a project," he says.



Pictured from left to right are McCarl Center tutors Libby Ferda, April Flynn, and Katie Smith.

Letter from the CGS Alumni Society President

Dear CGS alumni,

I am pleased to report on several developments that occurred at the Pitt Alumni Association board meeting during homecoming weekend that should be of interest to all alumni. A new set of bylaws will replace the current dues-paying model with a new all-inclusive membership model. I expect that this new model will result in a great increase in engagement and participation on the part of alumni. Details will be posted as soon as they are finalized at alumni.pitt.edu.

In July, I was appointed chair of the Pitt Advocacy Committee by alumni association president Gary Brownlee. Since then, I have collaborated with Kenny Donaldson in the Office of Alumni Relations on a presentation that we delivered to the alumni association board members during homecoming. We were pleased to report that there has been an increase in Pitt Advocates participation, from 1,800 to more than 3,000 individuals, and, through social media, we reached nearly 500,000 impressions for the With Pitt, PA Wins campaign as we shared our views with members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

As we head into a new year, I sincerely hope to see this momentum continue. In 2017, alumni can look forward to an updated Pitt Advocates Web site; an increased number of Pitt Advocates-backed

events; and a records database that will ensure that each and every elected official in the commonwealth is able to read stories about Pitt students, faculty, staff, and alumni and see the contributions they make to Pennsylvania and beyond. Pitt Advocates' signature event—Pitt Day in Harrisburg—is fast approaching. I encourage all alumni to visit the Pitt Advocates Web site at commrel.pitt.edu/pitt-advocates to keep up with the latest information and resources available to engage their elected officials.

Closer to home, Adam Robinson and I had the privilege of attending the homecoming banner luncheon and accepting a gold banner on behalf of the College of General Studies. A gold banner is awarded in recognition of the many contributions made to the University of Pittsburgh and the community by CGS students and alumni. I know that I join all of you in taking great pride in the many activities of CGS alumni, and I invite you to participate in the CGS Alumni Society.

Thank you very much for your time, and, as always, I welcome your questions and comments at bmountjoy@alumni.pitt.edu.

Hail to Pitt!
Bruce Mountjoy (BA '91)



Pictured from left to right are Adam Robinson and Bruce Mountjoy at the 2016 homecoming banner luncheon.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ryan Dunford (BA '10)

Ryan Dunford is a special agent for the Supreme Court of the United States Police, located in Washington, D.C.



In October, you came back to campus to recruit students for the U.S. Supreme Court police force. How was that experience?

"The experience was great. Pitt was the first place I thought about when I was selected by my chief of police to help with recruiting. Pitt has given me so much. It was great to be able to give back and help students to potentially find a career in law enforcement."

What was your most memorable moment as a student?

"Besides graduation, going to the morgue in Professor [Edward] Strimlan's Criminalistics class was my most memorable moment as a student. The smell of a dead body has never left me."

What is your advice for current CGS students?

"You get what you put in. The professors and advisors are always willing to help. Ask a lot of questions."

What do Pitt and the College of General Studies mean to you?

"It's tough to put into words what Pitt means to me. Pitt is where I met my wife, made many great friends, and turned into an adult. The decision to go to Pitt turned out to be the greatest decision I ever made. The College of General Studies steered me in the right direction for the career that I always wanted. The administration of justice professors have a wealth of knowledge and helped me to achieve my goal of getting into law enforcement."



Why did you choose to pursue a degree from the College of General Studies (CGS) at the University of Pittsburgh?

"I always wanted to get into law enforcement. My father was a police officer in Buffalo, N.Y., and my older brother is a special agent in the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]."

Did your degree and major in administration of justice prepare you for your career?

"My major and degree definitely helped to prepare me for my career. Learning the basics for a career in law enforcement put me a step ahead of many other new recruits down at our academy."

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Word on the Street

Why did you choose to major in administration of justice?



"I chose to major in administration of justice because jobs within law enforcement and the legal system make a significant difference in society. I think that this major is really underestimated, and individuals forget that it even exists, but it is necessary to have jobs in this field for our world to function as it does."

Taylor Anderson



"I chose administration of justice because it was a career path that would allow me to help people. After graduation, I would like to work in renewal or corrections, if possible, so I can help people get their lives back on track."

Shynna Pennington



"I appreciated the fact that many of the courses were taught by people who had worked in the field. It was a great benefit inside the classroom to have been given a realistic look inside law enforcement from judges, lawyers, and police officers, and it helps to establish important professional connections for later on."

Fina Abramovitz (BA '13)

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