Overcoming Obstacles: Success in Graduate School

“Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

When deciding whether to embark on a graduate education degree, there is often trepidation over its feasibility. Many consider the potential obstacles that may prevent successful completion, such as going back to school after a period away; balancing the demands of work, life, and school; and financial strain.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]
Once in graduate school, obstacles continue to be faced, such as navigating an online environment for the first time; grappling with more difficult subjects; time management; and increased writing expectations and intensity. Without the right mindset and clear vision toward the end goal, students can quickly become overwhelmed and enmired in the obstacles that stand in their way.

The question is not if you will encounter obstacles. Instead, the question is what will your perspective be when you do? Part of successfully overcoming obstacles requires the ability to adapt and problem solve leading to opportunities for learning and improvement. When viewed as opportunities to learn and improve, obstacles become challenges for growth rather than a threat that needs to be extinguished.

The pathway to success can be arduous. Accordingly, numerous examples exist of people who have experienced setbacks and hardships before achieving their goal. One such inspiration is Helen Keller, author, activist, and co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union who became blind and deaf at 19 months of age as a result of an illness. At the time she would enter school, she was assigned a teacher, Anne Sullivan, from the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston. Helen learned how to read, write, and speak and went on to graduate from Radcliffe College with honors. She writes of her journey, “Be of good cheer. Do not think of today’s failures, but of the success that may come tomorrow. You have set yourselves a difficult task, but you will succeed if you persevere, and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles—a delight in climbing rugged paths, which you would perhaps never know if you did not sometime slip backward—if the road was always smooth and pleasant.”

Dr. Laura Beckman, MAJJ Program Coordinator

I am excited to present to you our fifth edition of the Making Waves Graduate Newsletter. This edition features the theme of overcoming obstacles, something that every graduate student grapples with at some point of their career. As I reflect back to my time in graduate school, a lot has changed. Social media has transformed our lives, particularly our support systems. We are more connected than ever before, and yet we are living an “epidemic of loneliness and isolation” in the words of the U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy. Yet, overcoming obstacles requires a great deal of leaning on each other for support. Whether it is your family, friends, mentors, professors, or the university support systems, your success will be possible thanks to those kinships and friendships. Our newsletter seeks to bring awareness to some of the support systems that you can lean on. We are truly invested in your education and hope to make this resource as useful as possible. On that note, we are looking for stories to feature in our Fall/Winter 2023 newsletter. We want this newsletter to be your outlet, and so we welcome your submissions and ideas. Please contact Dr. Madero at amadero@ship.edu

Dr. Arelys Madero, MCRJ Program Coordinator
MCRJ Program

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<tr>
<th>Summer 2023</th>
<th>Fall 2023</th>
<th>Spring 2024</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term A: May 15 – June 23</td>
<td>Term A: August 28 – October 20</td>
<td>Term A: January 22 – March 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term B: June 26 – August 4</td>
<td>Term B: October 23 – December 15</td>
<td>Term B: March 18 – May 10</td>
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MAJJ Program

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<tr>
<td>Term A: May 15 - June 23</td>
<td>Classes Start: August 28</td>
<td>Classes Start: January 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term B: June 26 - August 4</td>
<td>Semester Ends: December 15</td>
<td>Semester Ends: May 10</td>
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Fall 2023 MAJJ Weekend Classes:
- September 9-10
- October 21-22
- December 2-3

Graduate Commencement:
- December 15, 2023 (Fall)
- May 10, 2024 (Spring/Summer)

MCRJ New Student Orientation:
- August 8, 2023
MAJJ Graduate Student Spotlight: Abigail Runk

“My perspective has changed, and I have found myself connecting the dots between our world and the information we have learned.”

1) Where are you from?

I’m from Dover, Pennsylvania, which is a small town in York County. I’ve lived there all my life.

2) What is your current position in the field? How long have you worked in that position?

I am a Supervisor with York County Juvenile Probation. I took the position in June 2022, after over 20 years as the Victim/Restitution Officer. Making that transition in the middle of grad school was a challenge!

3) Why did you decide to enroll in the MAJJ program?

I enrolled in the MAJJ program to open new doors and perspectives in my professional life. I considered it several years ago, but life got in the way at the time. Many of my colleagues have gone through the program, as well, so I knew it was pertinent to our jobs. I’m also a lifelong learner, so there was a part of me that liked the idea of pushing myself to a new goal.

4) What are 3 things that you learned in the program that you utilize in the workplace and/or in life?

- Going back to school over 20 years after my last college class was a challenge, especially when we started doing research—we used to actually go to the library! Being forced to get comfortable with new technology and research methods has helped in my daily life, both professionally and personally.

- I am also so grateful for our cohort; despite being a group of very different women in this field, we all meshed very well. As a result, I believe we’ve all learned to rely on each other and reach out for different ideas and solutions. Networking and information-sharing are invaluable tools in any field.

- As much as I would never have thought it, the focus on research and theory has kept me very engaged. My perspective has changed, and I have found myself connecting the dots between our world and the information we have learned, especially regarding the current state of the criminal and juvenile justice systems.
Luke is a student in the Masters of Science in Criminal Justice program at Shippensburg University. Aside from working toward his Master’s degree, Luke has worked in the criminal justice field for the past 15 years and is currently an Adult Probation/Parole Officer for Bucks County in Levittown, Pennsylvania.

Originally from Philadelphia, PA, Luke graduated from Neumann University in 2007 with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Music. Luke completed an internship his final semester with the Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office in Norristown, PA. Afterwards, he was hired by the Bucks County Correctional Facility in 2008 located in Doylestown, PA. In 2013, Luke started working at the Bucks County Adult Probation/Parole Department.

Shortly after becoming a Correctional Officer, Luke became a member of the Special Response Team and specialized in prisoner deescalation. In 2010, Luke was promoted to Community Correctional Officer and began supervising individuals on house arrest. While an Adult Probation/Parole Officer, he became a member of the arrest and search team and specialized in the search and seizure of dangerous weapons and drugs.

Luke is expected to graduate with a Masters of Science degree in Criminal Justice at Shippensburg University in the summer of 2023. Over his career, Luke has come to appreciate all of his co-workers and strives to be the best team player each day at work. Obtaining his Master’s degree has assisted Luke with understanding the barriers that his clients face and how to become an advocate for them to better themselves and their family members. Luke hopes to further enrich the lives of his colleagues and one day may interview for a supervisor position. Outside of his full-time job and schoolwork, Luke is a devoted husband and father to his two year old son, Matthew. He owns and operates a Disc Jockey business and enjoys entertaining his clients and their guests through emceeing and mixing music. He loves to travel and hopes to one day visit all 50 states in America.
**Dr. Laura Beckman**

★ Participated in a workgroup for the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission that is developing a monograph to address fundamental fairness in Pennsylvania’s juvenile justice system.

★ Presented on *Contextual Inequality and Sentencing* in the Criminal Justice Research Center’s Spring 2023 Criminology Speaker Series at Penn State University’s Department of Sociology and Criminology.

**Dr. Matthew Fetzer**

★ Sponsored graduate student research co-authored by Sydney Kunkel, on *Patterns & Trends of Homicide* that was presented at the 2023 Minds@Work conference.

★ Earned his SafeSport and Coaching certifications in his role as advisor/coach for the SU Boxing Club.

**Professor Stephanie Jirard**

★ Presented her paper "Sex, Drugs, and Rock-n-Roll: Celebrity Biography through the lens of the Reelz Show Autopsy . . . The Last Hours of . . . " at the Popular Culture Association’s national conference in San Antonio, TX.

★ In collaboration with Chief Juvenile Probation Judge Workman, Cumberland County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer Benner, and Director of Juvenile Services Lowe, Professor Jirard led a session on effective written and oral courtroom presentations for juvenile service providers at the Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth and Family Services conference in Harrisburg, PA.

**Dr. Melissa Ricketts**

★ In conjunction with Randi’s *House of Angels*, Dr. Ricketts is working to develop a series of podcasts on intimate partner violence.

★ Awarded sabbatical leave for the 2023-2024 academic year (Spring).

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**Collaborative Projects among CRJ Faculty**

**Drs. Beckman, Madero, and Ricketts.** presented their work at the 2023 Annual Meeting of Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) in National Harbor, MD. Their roundtable panel ‘Innovations and Challenges in Academic Advising’ examined current academic advising practices and provided new ideas for faculty seeking to enhance their roles as advisors, to make a positive impact on students.

**Drs. Madero and Rojas** presented their research study ‘Collective Efficacy and Crime: Exploring the Longitudinal Mechanisms in Los Angeles, 2000-2008’ also at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the ACJS.
Career & Professionalism Blog:
The Challenges of Writing in Graduate School

By Dr. Karen Gabrielle Johnson, Associate Professor, Department of Academic Engagement & Exploratory Studies

As you’ve probably already experienced by now, writing in graduate school can be a stress-filled exercise that can leave you feeling anxious, and for good reason. For one, if it’s been a while since you received your bachelor’s degree, then you may feel unprepared to write in a specified academic style because you haven’t had a writing-centric class in years. Even if it has not been long since you graduated, writing in graduate school is quite different than writing as an undergraduate: the writing standards are stricter; the types of writing assignments are more complex; the assignments and the actual writing take longer to complete; and writing assignments have a greater impact on your grade as a single paper can comprise a significant percentage of your final grade.

The act of writing can be also influenced by our confidence in our ability to write well or meet the standards of writing assignments. Many of us, and I include myself here, have struggled with imposter syndrome, which is the feeling of self-doubt about our abilities or accomplishments. This feeling can cause us to feel like we don’t belong or that someone will find out that we are a fraud. Students who wrestle with imposter syndrome may feel that if they reach out for support from faculty, fellow students, or other professionals on campus that their outreach will confirm they are imposters. However, reaching out to others is a healthy action and can help you overcome challenges you are facing.

How the Graduate Writing Center Can Help

The Graduate Writing Center is a place where writing is shared, and consultants respond to your needs for specific types of support. Highly trained consultants collaborate with you to get started on assignments, listen to your needs for feedback, interpret assignment expectations, learn APA style along with the citation and referencing rules, discuss grammar and mechanical errors, offer options for revision, improve the organization of ideas, and provide affirmation of your assignment’s strengths. Students attest to the effectiveness of writing consultations as our survey reveals that 97% strongly agree or agree that they were more confident about knowing how to finish their paper and how to improve their writing after participating in a session.

“I have gained self-confidence in my writing the most and deeply appreciate her help.”
Though we receive many comments in our anonymous online survey from writers expressing appreciation for the feedback on their writing, one writers’ comment especially captures the effectiveness of a writing center session: “[My consultant] has helped me evaluate how my writing can improve and what things I as a writer should pay attention to. I have gained self-confidence in my writing the most and deeply appreciate her help.”

As a busy graduate student, you may wonder if you have time to meet with a consultant, but our three-appointment options offer flexibility and convenience to fit your overloaded schedule. Face-to-face appointments are suited for students who want to meet with a consultant in-person. This type of appointment is good for papers in their early stages so that time can be spent on discussing the paper’s development. Synchronous appointments are similar to face-to-face appointments except that the meeting takes place over Zoom instead of in a physical campus location. In these appointments, the paper is shared on the screen as the paper is discussed. Finally, asynchronous appointments are perfect for students with hectic schedules and who are near the end of their writing process. The paper is sent an hour before the appointment time and feedback is given within 24 hours of the appointment time. A video screencast that discusses the paper is sent to the writer along with in-text comments and suggestions for revision. For all appointments, students send their papers one hour before a scheduled appointment so that consultants have time to review students’ papers, making their time with writers more productive. Appointments are quick and easy to schedule on our webpage by clicking this link.

If you have questions or just want to learn more about our services, don’t hesitate to reach out to me at kgjohnson@ship.edu

Student Testimonials

“I felt such a sense of support and encouragement with my writing!”

“Staff was very knowledgeable and kind. Made me feel very comfortable!”
Alumni Spotlight: Daisy Holston

Biography

- B.S. Criminal Justice, Albright College (ʻ10)
- M.S. Criminal Justice, St. Joseph’s University (ʻ13)
- M.S. Administration of Justice, Shippensburg University (ʻ20)
- 2021-present, Ph.D in Community Leadership, Alvernia University
- 2011-2016: Berks County Adult Probation Officer
- 2016-present: Berks County Intensive Drug and Alcohol Juvenile Probation Officer
- Community Youth Aid Panel Liaison
- 2016-present: Adjunct Professor, Reading Area Community College
- May of 2023 will be promoted to Assistant Chief of Juvenile Probation

Daisy holds a M.S. Administration of Justice from Shippensburg University.

Shippensburg University gave me a unique opportunity to discover leadership in a field that I love. This program allows individuals an opportunity to continue their educational journey without the worries of the financial hardships of paying for school. This college experience was quite different for me this time around as it allowed me to learn with other individuals who were in my field and experienced similar situations. I was very fortunate to have a cohort who became close and assisted one another throughout our time at Shippensburg. We have been able to maintain our friendships even after graduation. I hope that this program continues to have other officers that invest in themselves and join the many alumni of Shippensburg University.

“Continue to believe and build up others, so that they can learn to believe in themselves.”
## MAJJ Practicum Projects

Congratulations to our MAJJ students on the successful completion of their projects:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Faculty Advisor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arner, Nichole R.</td>
<td>“The Influence of Adolescence Trauma on Juvenile Substance Use.”</td>
<td>Dr. Arelys Madero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berzonsky, Kimberly A.</td>
<td>“The Effects of School Resource Officers on the School to Prison Pipeline.”</td>
<td>Dr. Arelys Madero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brumbaugh, Mikayla R.</td>
<td>“Examining the Link Between A Mental Health Diagnosis and Future Recidivism Among Adolescent Youth.”</td>
<td>Dr. Arelys Madero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl-Brown, Kjerstin</td>
<td>“Early Onset Delinquency and Recidivism.”</td>
<td>Dr. Cynthia Koller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchenoff, Ashley M.</td>
<td>“The Intersectionality of Risk Factors and the Rate of Recidivism as Differentiated by Gender.”</td>
<td>Dr. Cynthia Koller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McMullen, Megan R.</td>
<td>“Is the Family Environment/Dynamics Domain Score of the Youth Level of Service a Prediction for Recidivism?”</td>
<td>Dr. Matthew Fetzer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messner, Jennifer L.</td>
<td>“Does the YLS Effectively Assess the Risk and Recidivism of Juvenile Sex Offenders?”</td>
<td>Dr. Matthew Fetzer.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Runk, Abigail</td>
<td>“Victim Satisfaction: An Evaluation of Victim Services in York County Juvenile Court.” Faculty Advisor: Dr. Matthew Fetzer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres, Janelle C.</td>
<td>“Effectiveness of Truancy Intervention Programs: Getting to the Root of the Issue.” Faculty Advisor: Dr. Matthew Fetzer.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres-Gonzalez, Esperanza Y.</td>
<td>“From School Expulsion to Juvenile Delinquency.” Faculty Advisor: Dr. Cynthia Koller.</td>
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</table>

Collectively, these Practicum projects will add to the knowledge base of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in the state of Pennsylvania. This cohort of MAJJ graduates and Juvenile Probation professionals will share their expertise and knowledge in their workplaces. The CRJ faculty are proud of their hard work.

Congratulations!
Award Announcements

We are pleased to announce the 2023 recipient of the

Outstanding Masters in Criminal Justice Student Award:

Ms. Sydney Kunkel

For her academic excellence and commitment to the criminal justice profession, congratulations!
“Let us not lose sight of the enduring values that transcend money and status, carefully balancing the value of humanity in the midst of our lives.”

Student Remarks by Aaron M. Horst, MBA Graduate, at the 2023 Graduate Commencement.
Congratulations to our Spring Graduates!

Left: MCRJ Graduate, Zahmir Tripp. Right: MCRJ Class of 2023 and CRJ Faculty.

Left: MCRJ Graduate, Morgan Shaughnessy. Right: Dr. Sara Grove, Mace Bearer.
Meet Our Faculty

Department of Criminal Justice

Dr. Laura Beckman
Areas of expertise:
Race, ethnicity, and immigration in the juvenile justice, criminal justice systems.

Dr. Matthew Fetzer
Areas of expertise:
Measurement of crime and delinquency; hate crime; violence and juvenile justice.

Stephanie Jirard
Areas of expertise:
Constitutional law; capital punishment; race and gender in popular culture.

Dr. Cynthia Koller
Areas of expertise:
Juvenile justice; white collar crime; judicial corruption; sentencing disparities.

Dr. Arelys Madero
Areas of expertise:
Victimology; crime prevention; communities and crime; race/ethnicity.

Dr. Melissa Ricketts
Areas of expertise:
Intimate partner violence; substance abuse; school violence; correctional issues.

Dr. Carlos Rojas
Areas of expertise:
Race, ethnicity, immigration, and crime; environmental criminology.
Interested in one of our Masters Degrees?

**MCRJ Program**

Be the change you wish to see in the world with a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. This program is a 100% online program and meets the needs of both traditional graduate students and working professionals. Full-time students can earn their degree in one (1) year, while part-time students can do so in two (2) years.

**What will I learn?**

The program's major strengths are its applied perspective and strong emphasis on theory, policy, research and analysis. Courses provide you with the knowledge and skills to undertake independent, critical investigation of issues related to crime control and justice policy.

**What are the requirements?**

- A bachelor's degree in criminal justice, administration of justice or related social science field from a regionally accredited college or university.
- Minimum grade point average of a 2.75 on a 4.0 scale. Applicants with less than a 2.75 undergraduate GPA will be required to take the Graduate Requisite Examination (GRE) and provide a sufficient score before they are eligible for admission. They may also take the Millers Analogies Test (MAT) and provide a sufficient score.
- A statement of interest (500 words or less) indicating your reasons for pursuing this program, your professional goals and how this degree will help fulfill said goals.
- A resume is optional.

**Ready to Apply?**

Go to [https://www.ship.edu/programs/criminal-justice-ms/](https://www.ship.edu/programs/criminal-justice-ms/)

**Questions?**

Please contact the Program Coordinator, Dr. Arelys Madero, via email at amadero@ship.edu or call (717) 477-1773.
MAJJ Program

The Master of Science in Administration of Juvenile Justice program represents a unique collaboration between the Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, its Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research and the Criminal Justice Department of Shippensburg University. This one-of-a-kind program offers classes through a hybrid format, combining face-to-face sessions and online course content. Classes meet three weekends each semester during the fall and spring semesters. During the summer terms, all coursework is completed online.

What will I learn?

The program is competency-based. The faculty who teach in the program are committed to providing a high quality education that will prepare you to provide evidence-based services that are ethical, impartial and effective in a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse society.

What are the requirements?

The program is available to full-time county juvenile probation officers in Pennsylvania who graduated from an accredited college or university with at least 18 credits in the behavioral or social sciences, and who have been, or will be, employed in the juvenile justice system for at least two years prior to admission. As space allows, county juvenile detention staff (and other juvenile justice professionals, on a self-pay basis) may be admitted to the program upon the recommendation of the Juvenile Court Administrative Judge.

Students must agree to attend the program continuously for two calendar years and to maintain their current employment status for the duration of the program and for at least two years after graduation. Students who fail to meet these conditions will be required to reimburse the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all, or a portion of, tuition costs paid on their behalf.

Ready to Apply?

Go to https://www.ship.edu/programs/administration-juvenile-justice-ms/

Questions?

Please contact the Program Coordinator, Dr. Laura Beckman, via email at lobeckman@ship.edu or call (717) 477-1763.
4+1 Program

Complete your bachelors and master’s degrees in criminal justice at Shippensburg University, in just five years.

**BENEFITS**

- Save time by starting graduate school earlier
- Save money by paying a portion of your graduate courses at the undergraduate tuition rate

**ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.0 minimum GPA
- 75 credits
- Satisfactory completion of CRJ 309 and CRJ 310

**APPLICATION**

- Personal statement
- Updated resume
- Detailed plan of study

Applications are due by April 1st.

**CONTACT US**

- crimjust@ship.edu
- 717.477.1558

QUALITY education in a school you TRUST