



Crime & Grits

ISSUE XIII | JUNE 2026

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSOCIATION

Welcome From the Executive Board

Welcome to the Summer 2026 issue of Crime & Grits! As we settle into the summer months—and the familiar Southern heat—the Board is thrilled to share our latest regional updates.

First, a massive thank you to everyone who joined us this past March at the ACJS annual meeting in Philadelphia. It was wonderful connecting with so many of you during our Region II Reception at Sueño. The energy and collegiality of that evening are exactly what make our regional identity so special, and it was the perfect kickoff to our 2026 agenda.

Now, all eyes are looking toward the coast. Inside this issue, President Shaun Thomas shares all the details about our upcoming SCJA Annual Meeting in Fort Lauderdale, including an important extension for abstract submissions.

We also have a packed issue covering essential summer business. Please pay close attention to the impending deadlines for the 2026 Executive Board elections and our annual SCJA awards. You will also find fantastic updates on the surging submission rates at the American Journal of Criminal Justice from Editor-in-Chief J.C. Barnes, an ACJS dispatch from our Region II Trustee Francis Boateng, a professional spotlight on Dr. Carter, and a timely Grit & Growth column on managing burnout and obstacles. Stay cool, take time to recharge this summer, and enjoy the issue!

--The Board

To Do List & Dates

To learn more about these opportunities, you can click the text for additional information.



[Student & Untenured Faculty travel award applications due](#)



[Abstracts for 2026 Annual Meeting due](#)



[Students, Educator, & Professional award nominations due](#)



[Voting deadline for 2nd VP and Directors-at-Large elections](#)



[Last day for Westin Beach Resort reservations on SCJA rate](#)



[SCJA 2026 Annual Meeting begins in Ft. Lauderdale, FL!](#)

Follow us on social media!



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Message from the President



Hello, SCJA!

I hope everyone is having a productive and enjoyable summer. As we move closer to our 2026 Annual Meeting, I want to share a few updates and encourage everyone to begin making plans to join us in Fort Lauderdale this September.

First, I am excited to announce that **the deadline for abstract submissions for the 2026 SCJA Annual Meeting has been extended to June 30, 2026.** We have already received many outstanding submissions, and we want to provide a little extra time for those who may still be finalizing papers, panels, roundtables, or posters. If you have been considering submitting your work, now is the time! We look forward to showcasing the outstanding scholarship, innovative programs, and impactful practices that continue to define our association. Our 2026 Annual Meeting will be held September 14–18, 2026, in Fort Lauderdale Beach, Florida, and we are thrilled about what promises to be an exceptional conference. The Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort offers a beautiful beachfront location, outstanding meeting space, and an incredible room rate that provides tremendous value for attendees. September is a wonderful time to visit South Florida, with warm temperatures, ocean breezes, and plenty of opportunities to enjoy the beach, restaurants, and attractions that Fort Lauderdale has to offer. We are excited to bring SCJA back to the coast and provide an environment that encourages professional engagement and meaningful networking.

This year's conference theme, "Justice in Transition: Innovation, Equity, and Community," reflects the profound changes occurring across justice systems today. From emerging technologies and evolving social challenges to new approaches to teaching, research, policy, and practice, justice professionals are navigating a period of significant transformation. The theme invites us to consider how innovation can improve outcomes and how communities continue to play a critical role in shaping effective and sustainable justice solutions.

We look forward to seeing the ways our members engage with these important issues through their presentations and discussions.

The Executive Board remains committed to supporting the next generation of scholars and practitioners. The Board is once again offering travel awards for students and untenured faculty to help offset the costs of attending the meeting. These awards have become an important part of our efforts to increase accessibility and participation, and we encourage eligible members to apply.

As always, the success of our conference depends on the support and engagement of our members, sponsors, and partners. If you are interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities or other ways to support the 2026 meeting, please contact Dr. Ben Stickle, our Program Chair, at Ben.Stickle@mtsu.edu. Sponsorship support helps us enhance programming, provide networking opportunities, and continue initiatives such as our travel awards.

Thank you for your continued commitment to SCJA. Our association remains strong because of the dedication, scholarship, and collegiality of its members. I look forward to reviewing your submissions, seeing many of you at the beach in September, and continuing to build on SCJA's tradition of bringing together scholars, practitioners, and students.

With appreciation,

Shaun Thomas

President,
Southern Criminal Justice Association



TRAVEL AWARDS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Student & Untenured Faculty Travel Awards

Chair: Dr. Richard Stringer | rstring7@kennesaw.edu

[Apply using the form at this link](#) before June 24

Undergraduate and graduate students, as well as untenured faculty, are eligible to apply for this award that provides a two-night stay at the conference hotel. Preference given to applicants currently enrolled in schools within the Southern region.

All applicants must be 1) current members of SCJA at the time of application, 2) lead author on a paper or poster at the conference (it's okay if you have not submitted your paper yet), and 3) available to stay for two nights at the conference hotel.

Loss Prevention Research Council Travel Grants

Contact: Dr. Ben Stickle | ben.stickle@lpresearch.com

Marvin D. Krohn Life Course & Developmental Crime Prevention Travel Award

Honoring Dr. Marv Krohn's legacy of dedicated mentorship, friendship, and scholarship. This award supports graduate students presenting theoretical or empirical research grounded in the life-course developmental paradigm of prevention science. Special consideration is given to work with practical implications for retail loss prevention.

Apply by August 1
[Link to Application](#)

Richard C. Hollinger Situational & Environmental Crime Prevention Travel Award

Honoring Dr. Dick Hollinger's instrumental work in evidence-based retail crime research. This award supports graduate students presenting research grounded in situational or environmental crime prevention theory (manipulating the built environment to reduce opportunities, increase risks, or lower rewards for offending).

Apply by August 1
[Link to Application](#)

SCJA ANNUAL AWARDS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

See [SCJA website here](#) for additional details and apply by July 1

Tom Barker Outstanding Undergraduate Student

Chair: Dr. Abby Novak | anovak@olemiss.edu

Recognizes undergraduate excellence in scholarship, leadership, and public service. Includes travel stipend.

Outstanding Masters Student

Chair: Dr. Ashley Riechelmann | avr@vt.edu

Honors exceptional graduate work. Includes travel stipend and a 3-year SCJA membership.

Outstanding Doctoral Student

Chair: Dr. Matthew Costello | miscoste@clemson.edu

Honors exceptional doctoral work. Includes travel stipend plus a free 3-year SCJA membership.

Outstanding Educator Award

Chair: Dr. John Stogner | johnstogner@charlotte.edu

Recognizes outstanding achievement across teaching, research, and service. Winner receives a lifetime membership.

Outstanding Professional Award

Chair: Dr. John Sloan | prof@uab.edu

Recognizes exemplary practitioner contributions in the Southern region. Winner receives an honorarium to attend.



VOTING OPEN UNTIL JULY 9!

The SCJA Nominations & Elections Committee is pleased to announce the ballots are open for the 2026 officer elections. As one of the nation's leading regional organizations for scholars, practitioners, and students in the field of criminal justice, SCJA thrives on the dedication, vision, and leadership of its members. This is your opportunity to help shape the future of the Association and strengthen our collective voice in advancing research, teaching, and practice across the discipline.

Elected officers play a vital role in setting the organization's direction, supporting our annual conference, promoting student and early-career member engagement, and ensuring that SCJA remains an inclusive and innovative forum for the exchange of ideas. Serving in one of these roles offers a meaningful opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from across the country and contribute directly to the growth and vitality of the SCJA.

The election process follows SCJA's bylaws and are conducted electronically. Newly elected officers will transition into their roles at the SCJA Annual Meeting this fall in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Your participation in the election, as a nominee or a voter, is essential to maintaining a vibrant member-driven organization. SCJA's strength lies in our collaborative spirit and shared commitment to advancing the field. By stepping forward or nominating a colleague, you help ensure that the SCJA continues to thrive and embody the highest standards of scholarship and service in the field. We are thankful for your participation in shaping the leadership and future of SCJA!

Julie Baldwin
Immediate Past President

Ballots are open for three positions on the SCJA Executive Board:

Director-at-Large (2 positions)

2nd Vice-President

Members of the organization receive ballot details via email with a unique link to submit their votes for open positions.

[Review the candidate statements and biographies here.](#)

The voting deadline is July 9, 2026 11:00 AM Eastern Time.

ACJS Region 2 Representative Report



Greetings, SCJA!

Here are a few updates from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences to keep you in the loop on what is happening at the national level, specifically things that the ACJS board addressed during our annual meeting in March. If you have any questions or would like to discuss some of these items further, please reach out to me.

- **JCJE Updates:** The ACJS Executive Board approved Dr. Jennifer Gibbs as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. A forthcoming special issue will target Criminal Justice Education Practices for Academics and Practitioners: Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Issues.
- **Justice Quarterly Initiatives:** Approved an upcoming JQ special issue titled "*Types of Causation and Their Relevance for Crime and Justice Theory and Policy*," guest-edited by Mark C. Stafford and Daniel P. Mears. The JQ editorial board is also expanding by eight new members.
- **Global Outreach:** The board passed a motion providing dedicated annual funding for ACJS journal editors to attend an international conference to expand journal visibility.

-Dr. Francis D. Boateng
fboateng@olemiss.edu

Looking Ahead to 2027

The ACJS Mid-Year Executive Board Meeting is set for October 2-4, 2026, in Orlando, Florida. This serves as the runway for the **2027 ACJS Annual Conference**, taking place *March 30-April 3, 2027*, at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center.

Theme

Criminal Justice Leadership: Forging Stronger Connections Between Research, Education, and Practice

Keynote Speaker

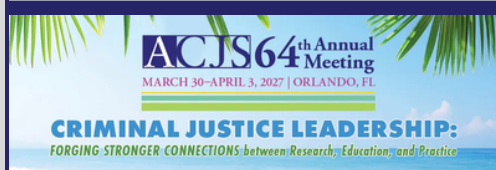
Professor Tom R. Tyler
Yale Law School, 2024 Stockholm Prize Winner in Criminology Justice

Abstracts

The abstract submission portal is officially open. Members are strongly encouraged to submit early.

Early Registration

Early bird discount registration is available through February 12 to save some money.



Celebrating Regional Success

Region II demonstrated exceptional scholarship this past year, bringing home nine distinct ACJS awards across various categories. Notably, Dr. Brandon Applegate (University of South Carolina) received the prestigious Academy Fellow Award for his outstanding record of research and service to the academy. The other awards received by Region 2 Members included:

- Sonja E. Siennick, Florida State University
 - William L Simon Routledge Outstanding Paper Award
- Sara Evans, Kennesaw State University
 - Cognella Future Innovators in CJ Education Award
- Godwin Egbe, University of Mississippi
 - Student Poster Presentation Award: 2nd Place; Student Panel Presentation Award: 1st Place
- Samuel Agboola, University of Mississippi
 - ACJS Student Scholarship Award; Student Scholarship Mini-Grant Travel Award for People of Color & Women
- Hyeseon Noh, University of South Carolina
 - Student Scholarship Mini-Grant Travel Award for People of Color & Women
- Francis Boetang, University of Mississippi
 - ACJS Minority Mentorship Grant Award



American Journal of Criminal Justice

Editor's Report

Dear Fellow Southern Members,

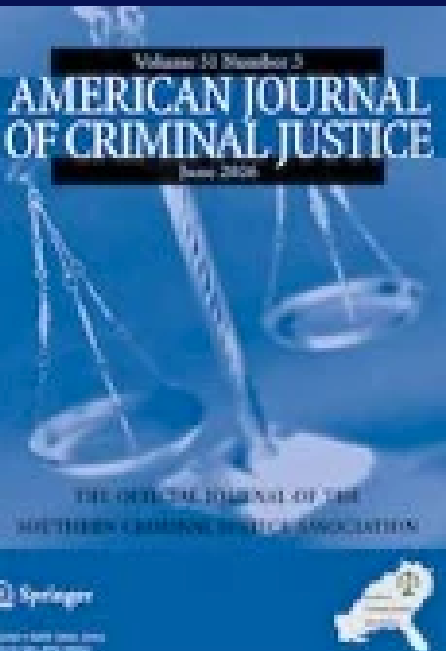
It's been a great year for AJCJ! As you can see from the line graph, our submission rate is surging! We are nearly 40% above our normal rate (150 papers so far) and we're on pace to top 300 submissions this year. Even better, the quality of submissions is going up, too.

So, you can see how I plan to spend my summer — ha ha! I'm going to need a break this fall, which is why I'm looking forward to the annual SCJA conference in September. That's where we'll host the annual meeting for the journal. I hope you can join me down in sunny Ft. Lauderdale.

Sincerely,

J.C. Barnes, Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief,
American Journal of Criminal Justice



Latest Issue

June 2026

[Volume 51, Issue 3, can be found at this link](#)

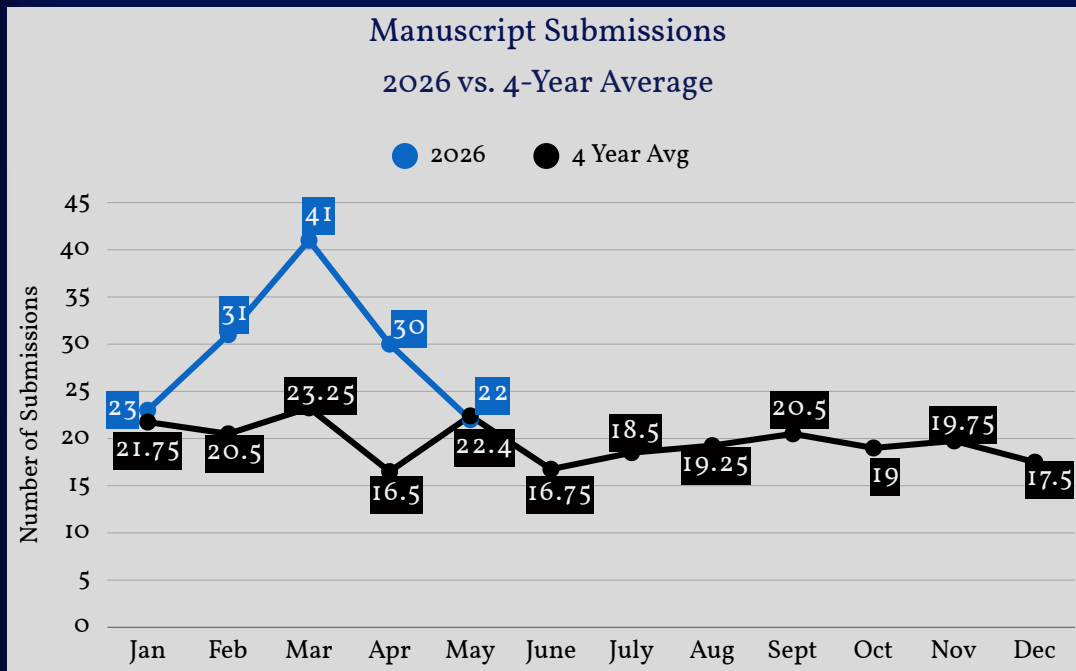
Open Access

[Check out the open access articles from the journal at this link.](#)

Crime & Place Collection

Articles on understanding & preventing crime at the micro-geographic level.

[See the call for papers at this link.](#)



Submission to first decision (median): 26 days

Impact Factor (2024): 2.0

Ranked #2 in Policing journals

Grit & Growth



Gravity Humbled Me and My Ego: A Commitment to No Zero Days Sarah Harper, Ph.D.

In academic spaces, we often look at finished manuscripts, secured federal grants, and polished lectures while possibly neglecting or ignoring the basic infrastructure holding those achievements up. We talk endlessly about curriculum and development, but rarely about the mechanics of keeping your head above water when the tide rolls in unexpectedly fast and forces us to be humble so we can lean into the slow process of getting a rhythm back.

Over the last six months, a combination of sudden health issues and a deeply felt personal loss forced me to step back and re-evaluate my own structural limits. When you are managing a research team, mentoring students, and/or navigating the administrative demands of a department, personal crises can make the entire framework feel fragile. There are moments when you look at an upcoming deadline and the sheer weight of what needs doing prompts a brief, quiet tantrum before you can find the space to rally.

Gravity is real, concrete is unforgiving, and skulls are sensitive. The nature of my injury and related complications, unfortunately, meant I had to take on navigating the accommodation process, leave options, communicating with collaborators and research administrators, workload reductions, and work assignment modifications while my brain was supposed to be recovering and the tenure clock ticking. *Cool.*

During this season of stumbles, falls, and small wins, I found myself returning to an old piece of advice originally shared on a graduate school subreddit by a user named u/ryansOI: the philosophy of **No Zero Days**. I have previously written about my Steal the Canoe philosophy from Reddit that related to audacious pursuit of goals, but this one I came across while navigating a different concussion recovery period during my dissertation. Worry not, friends--I do have plenty of cushions and safety equipment to account for my apparent vulnerability to Gravity Storms.

The core premise of No Zero Days (NZD) is starkly simple without the toxic productivity rhetoric of

an Instagram reel with a contemplative instrumental soundtrack: promise yourself that your daily operations run on a non-zero system. A Zero Day is a day when you do absolutely nothing toward the goals, writing projects, or obligations you have steeled your mind to complete. There are more subcomponents to the NZD model in his original post, but I'll summarize three main things.

Ryan explained that turning things around doesn't require becoming an overnight master of the universe; it requires a consistent string of non-zeros. Is it 11:58 PM and you are completely spent? Write *one* solid sentence. Read *one* page of that master's thesis. Fix *one* broken line of code in an analysis script. *One* pushup. *One* is non-zero. It keeps the momentum alive and prevents self-doubt from closing in. The next day could still only be one, but you may get the flow state to roll into two, or three, or 53.

The second rule of his system is learning to navigate the **three versions of yourself**: the past you, the present you, and the future you. Along with most people I know, I am quick to criticize past choices, but lasting resilience requires showing real gratitude to my younger self when she made a good decision. Did I handle a heavy task yesterday so today's schedule is lighter? Take a literal second to say, "Thank you, Younger Me."

I also have to look at my future self as my closest colleague. When I have enough energy reserved to spend ten minutes organizing a module or to dictate an abstract for an upcoming conference

Grit & Growth



(like our SCJA 2026 Annual Meeting; deadline extended to June 30!), I am doing a massive favor for my future self.

The third component is the most important: **forgive yourself**. You may notice that I switch to second person language here, as this is my biggest challenge in the NZD model--I don't want to be insincere by conveying mastery in a domain where I legitimately struggle on a regular basis. As it turns out, brain weasels like disappointment and self-flagellation are massive drains on remaining energy. If you attempted to have a highly productive day and the wheels completely fell off, accept it, extend yourself some grace, say *I forgive you* out loud to your past self, and pivot. Today is a new canvas.

The biggest asset I had in this journey allowed me a soft place to land: my mentors and peers. In previous issues, this feature explored finding and fostering mentorship, drawing on a community, and the value of our network. Surrounding yourself with a genuine community means finding people who guide you, check in on you, and offer a firm step forward when you are stuck, but care too much to let you phone it in or become complacent. It means finding the rhythm to stay afloat, even if that rhythm is just sitting down with a bag of gummy bears in my writing hoodie like I am right now to tackle that single, non-zero sentence. I had people extending grace and reminding me of challenges I had overcome previously.

My accident came just at the end of the Fall semester, so I figured I would be recovered by the start of the Spring semester with the full winter break to take it easy. Alas, I was immediately humbled by communication and executive functioning challenges at our faculty retreat the week before the semester began. After the meeting, I first called the neurologist to express my fury about the indifference of

No Zero Days

Build momentum and mitigate self-doubt by doing more than zero, even if it is *one*.

Three Versions of You

Past you, present you, and future you are a team that wins through grace and support to/from one another.

Forgiveness

Offer forgiveness *out loud* from Present You to Past You so that Future You benefits from the pivot you're about to make instead of the drain that comes from self-anger.

gravity; my next calls were to my three closest mentors who gave me practical steps to comply with their firm instruction: take recovery seriously so I don't do lasting damage to my capacity to perform longer term. Their experiences and wisdom equipped me with a better understanding of those complex HR processes than my mushy head could ever make sense of on its own. Unfortunately, right as I thought I was rolling along into "all better," I had another episode in April. The good news is that I had strategies that helped me get essential things done in short tasks and still follow recovery protocols. Friends, I have attempted more dictation with an exhausted Southern accent to my digital assistant (affectionately named Mrs. Landingham so I can feel like President Bartlett from *The West Wing*) and Co-Pilot polished emails to more people in the past six months than I ever wanted, but things needed to still get done in some manner. People were likely a bit thankful that I had more succinct email replies, so that's a silver lining, at least--Future Self, you're welcome. Let's keep moving forward. One sentence at a time.



SCJA IN PHILLY



RECAP

General Business Meeting

The Executive Board members shared reports and progress on agenda items following the midyear meeting. 1st VP Ben Stickle & 2nd VP Jim Hawdon shared prospective sites for 2027 and 2028, audit committee and treasurer reported healthy, balanced accounts. Many cheesesteaks were consumed. SCJA had heavy regional representation on the program.

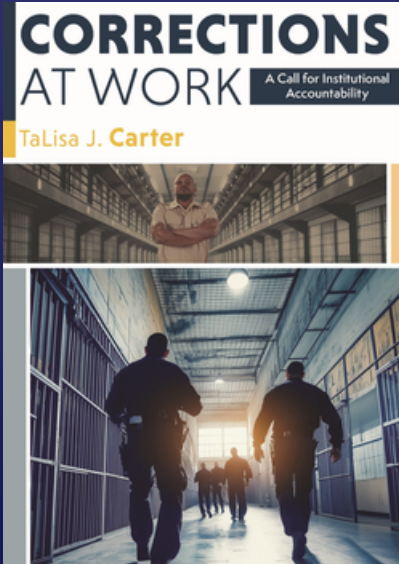


SCJA (Region II) Reception

Members and guests gathered on Thurs, March 5th at Sueño for socializing, connecting and expanding networks, plus some tasty tacos to cap a long day of panels at the conference. Thanks to Director-at-Large and Membership Committee Chair Dr. Sherri Keenan and former Region II Rep Dr. John Stogner for scouting out the venue! A good time was had by all.



Author & Member Spotlight



Dr. TaLisa J. Carter

Recent Book: **Corrections at Work**

Associate Professor, American University

Director, Inclusive Excellence for School of Public Affairs

Director, MS Program in Justice, Law, and Criminology

What Counts as Accountability in Corrections?

Across correctional settings, accountability is often discussed as a matter of policy: rules, procedures, and formal systems designed to guide behavior. But in practice, accountability is experienced through something much more immediate: how institutions respond to people.

In *Corrections at Work* (NYU Press), Dr. TaLisa J. Carter examines accountability not as a static framework, but as an ongoing institutional process shaped by everyday decisions. Drawing on qualitative research and her experience as a former deputy correctional officer, the book introduces a model for understanding how responses to staff behavior, whether disciplinary, corrective, or affirming, signal what an organization values.

This perspective shifts the focus from individual misconduct to institutional response. Rather than asking only why individuals behave as they do, *Corrections at Work* asks how organizations interpret, respond to, and ultimately reproduce patterns of behavior through their actions.

For practitioners, this raises important questions about consistency, discretion, and organizational culture: What messages are conveyed through formal and informal responses? How do responses differ across individuals and contexts? And how do these patterns shape morale, legitimacy, and performance?

For scholars, the book offers a framework for analyzing accountability as a dynamic process embedded within organizational life, bridging research on social control, workplace behavior, and institutional decision-making.

At a moment when correctional institutions are navigating complex challenges—including staffing pressures, public scrutiny, and evolving expectations—understanding accountability as lived practice rather than policy alone offers a critical lens for both research and reform.

SCJA 2026

— Fort Lauderdale, Florida —



The Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort

September 14-18, 2026



Don't forget!!

Renew your
membership, register
for the annual
meeting, submit
abstract by 6/30,
vote by 7/8



Thank you for reading!

www.southerncj.org

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by the

Records & Communication Committee
Chair: Dr. Sarah Harper