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Message from the Director, Dr. Mansfield Mela

Collaboration can mean working with someone to produce or create something and that 'someone' may be close or distant to you but always interested in what you are doing. Dr. John Weekes, our guest researcher profiled in this newsletter, is the epitome of a collaborator. Despite his changing portfolio, since joining the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies ten years ago, he has remained the visible and long-term partner we cherish. It is no surprise, as you will read that his work intersects with what we do in the Centre even though he is not located at the University of Saskatchewan or even in this province. We always seek similar engaged scholars to co-create systems that impact the criminal justice system and reduce victimization.

Recently, the University of Saskatchewan started working towards revitalizing the concept and practice of publicly engaged scholarship. The goal is to support community-focused work that is relevant to the members of society. I am pleased to observe that the Forensic Centre was created with ideas such as this in mind. The projects the Centre completed in the past dovetail directly into such work with long lasting impact on the community. A review of housing needs for offenders, strategies for desistance from gangs, support for conflict resolution through the Restorative Action Program in schools, evaluating the Mental Health Court in Saskatoon are just a few of the examples of community focused work. Our Violence & Aggression Symposium and annual Public Forum sessions were designed to involve frontline staff and community members to interact with researchers in a cross pollination of ideas; ideas that effectively change the system. We will continue to pursue the same type of work and enhance our public engagement in the coming years.

You may find the themes and Twitter links to emerging issues in the field interesting and relevant.

My desire is that, as you read this newsletter, you will consider research in any of the highlighted areas and that you will also want to collaborate with those researching in the area(s) and with the Centre.

We are pleased to announce, in this issue, the recent awardees of the fall 2021 faculty and graduate research grant applications. A special mention and thanks for the funds allocated by the College of Medicine directed at faculty development, which was awarded to Dr. Olusegun Oyedokun and his team. Another round of funding will be announced this spring for graduate research awards. Please review the previously funded research grants over the years for a good summary of past/ongoing funded projects [Graduate Student Awards](#) & [Faculty Research Grants](#)

Students (undergraduate and graduate) continue to participate and contribute to the research conducted in the Forensic Centre. The start of Term 2 was no different as we engaged learners from the Applied Psychology program and are now exploring the School of Public Health to recruit student researchers. We plan to arrange a 'Meet the Expert' day with the Director of the Research Implementation Branch (RIB) of Integrated Justice Services, Government of Saskatchewan. Please watch for that announcement.

Take care,

Mansfield Mela, Director
CFBSJS

We are *always* looking to engage scholars and partners. We value [your feedback](#) on this and future newsletters.



John Weekes, Executive Director, Homewood Research Institute

Member of the CFBSJS Advisory Board, Violence & Aggression Symposium Planning Committee, and Research Grant Review Committee

Forensic Centre Member's Research Highlight

A Career of Collaboration
Dr. John Weekes

Like many people, Dr. John Weekes happened into his lifelong career by a bit of luck and chance. Having been interested in justice studies since his undergraduate studies at Carleton, he “threw his hat in the ring” to the Correctional Service of Canada and was offered a position with a monumental decision to make – move from Ontario where he was born and raised to either Drumheller, Alberta or Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The dinosaurs and admirable Warden at Drumheller Institution won and John moved his young family to Alberta to start with CSC on, to his detailed recollection, Monday March 6, 1989.

Working in a correctional setting was an eye-opener for John as he saw firsthand the operations of the Canadian prison system. It was not too far into his career that the importance of appreciating lived experience and issues of stigma surrounding involvement in the justice system were evident. This experience helped form the meaningful research he would conduct and oversee from then on.

It was through his role as a researcher and then leader, now back in Ottawa, with the Research Branch and the Addictions Research Centre of CSC that John first partnered with the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies after its formal inception in 2011. He worked closely with the Centre's founder and long-time friend and colleague, Dr. Stephen J. Wormith and staff on CSC/CFBSJS research projects under two of now three, 5-year Memorandums of Agreement. Retiring from CSC in 2019 after 30 years did not end his support of the Forensic Centre. He continues to serve on adjudication committees for Student Research Awards and Faculty Research Development Grants, is a member of the Advisory Board, and lends his time and expertise to the biennial [Violence & Aggression Symposium](#) (V&A) planning committee including the next virtual offering June 14-15, 2021. On ‘non-V&A years’ he also serves in a similar capacity on the program committee for the [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction's](#) biennial conference, Issues of Substance.

John has made a career out of collaboration and takes pride in the many friendships, partnerships, and significant impacts on research and community as a result. He strives to undertake work that “impacts people's lives” and in turn, he himself affects many individual's lives. His commitment to giving back and knowledge sharing started shortly after he defended his own PhD thesis in 1993. He became an Adjunct Research Professor of Forensic Psychology and Addiction in the Department of Psychology at the Carleton University and since then has been involved in mentoring and supervising the undergraduate and graduate work of literally hundreds of students -- most of whom he still keeps in contact with and in whom he has instilled his passion for helping others and a recognition and understanding of the importance of networking.

(Cont. next page)

More recently, John joined the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University as an adjunct faculty member where he contributes to shape priorities for the Department's research agenda and serving on various anti-stigma and anti-racism committees and working groups.

Making and keeping connections extended internationally for John who has provided regular consultant work from England to Australia to Norway and Sweden for decades. While face-to-face site visits may be on hold thanks to the pandemic, many (many) people worldwide know that John is only a phone/video call or email away to consult with or to just enjoy his easy banter. He appears to work so hard that the time differences may not even be an issue.

Retirement from CSC for John included taking up new hobbies, learning new skills, and becoming Director of a major research institute at the [Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care](#) in Penetanguishene, Ontario. Waypoint's mission, vision, and values aligned well with John's: to provide excellence in specialized mental health and addictions services grounded in research and education with the vision to change lives by leading the advancement and delivery of compassionate care. The Centre aims to treat every person with sensitivity and to recognize the fundamental worth of every person – the same values that formed John's professional and personal life since his early days working with incarcerated people at Drumheller Institution.

To further enjoy "retirement", John and his wife Helen moved to Guelph, Ontario in August 2020 after he accepted the role of Executive Director of the [Homewood Research Institute](#). This new position further advances John's goal of conducting impactful research – to lead HRI's research ambitious research agenda driven by innovation and discovery and by advancing the availability of evidence-based interventions and supports to improve the lives of Canadians, and beyond.

In addition to mastering the art of collaboration, which is not easy, John makes knowledge sharing a top priority. Conducting research that can influence policy by effective, evidence-based storytelling is a major marker of success for John. He has served as an expert witness on multiple House of Commons and Senate of Canada committees to help shape federal legislation and develop national strategies relating to mental health and addictions in Canada. While seeing his work make positive changes is rewarding, perhaps the most important recognition to-date was in 2018 being awarded the prestigious *Maud Booth Correctional Service Award* by the [Volunteers of America](#) for his career contributions to humanitarian corrections and criminal justice on an international scale.

John's commitment to collaboration and knowledge sharing, in addition to his extremely easygoing personality, has made him a valuable member of many networks. The Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Studies is thankful to call him a partner, supporter, and above all else, friend. Alberta may have 'won' John in the 80's but it is safe to say he is now a globally *shared* treasure.



Photos provided by Homewood Research Institute
Interview by L. Sorowski, CFBSJS (2021)

We welcome all feedback!

Please provide [HERE](#) at any time.

Topics from the Field

Prepared by Dr.
Davut Akca,
Research Officer

CFBSJS

Currently working
remotely but normally we
can be found at:
110A, 9 Campus Drive
University of
Saskatchewan
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306-966-2687
forensic.centre@usask.ca



...

Autism activists are denouncing defence arguments made in Alek Minassian's murder trial as speculative and demeaning, saying they could spread inaccuracies about a disorder that is not associated with violence.

[@nadineyousif_](#) [@alysanmati](#)

Is autism behind Minassian's violent attack?

Alex Minassian's lawyer argues that he is not criminally responsible because of his autism disorder. He only understood the wrongfulness of his actions at that "intellectual level," and not in a way that led to making rational decisions. Autism activists expressed worry that the defence arguments promote stigma for people with autism.

How can research help reducing the stigma around mental illnesses especially in the criminal justice system?

Photo: @TorontoStar



Erin O'Toole
@erinotoole

...

Not one criminal should be vaccinated ahead of any vulnerable Canadian or front line health worker.

Should inmates be prioritized in the COVID-19 vaccination plan?

The opposition leader Erin O'Toole's tweet against the prioritization of inmates in the COVID-19 vaccine queue have been denounced by criminal justice scholars and practitioners. What does research say about the need for prioritization of inmates in health crises?

Are you interested in conducting research on the impact of the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and/or on inmates?

Photo: @erinotoole



The Washington Post
@washingtonpost

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U.S. Capitol riot, a Black Lives Matter protest: A visual comparison of two starkly different policing responses in Washington

Riot policing: Does it matter who the rioters are?

The police's response to the riot at the Capitol has been criticized by policing scholars. The differences between the police response in BLM protests vs. the Capitol riot was discussed in a recent Washington Post article.

What implications can be derived from these events for a better police selection process and riot policing policies?

Photo: @washingtonpost



Tom Cardoso
@tom_cardoso

...

In 2004, Public Safety Canada researchers wrote an internal report warning CSC's leadership of serious flaws in its most important risk assessment for both women and men — 16 years later, the tool is unchanged.

Are risk assessment tools used by CSC gender-biased?

An internal report on the Custody Rating Scale used by CSC was disclosed by the Globe and Mail. The report, written in 2004, underlined flaws with the tool such as bias against women. Despite recommendations to design a new one, it is still in use.

How can a bias-free risk assessment tool be developed? What risk tools do you consider 'risk blind'? Are you interested in collaborating in research on better informed risk tools?

Photo: @tom_cardoso

Research and Evaluation Reports

L. Jewell, D. Akca, S. Mulligan, S. Wormith (2020)

[Northeast Youth Violence Reduction Partnership \(NYVRP\) Final Evaluation](#)

Online Articles

Akca, D. (December 2020). Does personality matter in investigative interviewing? BlueLine <https://www.blueline.ca/does-personality-matter-in-investigative-interviewing/>

Crime Protective and Preventive Role of the Emergency Department: A Scoping Review (2021)

T. O. Oyedokun, College of Medicine

Parental Experiences of Violated Expectations After Disclosure of Child Interpersonal Trauma (2021)

J. Cummings, Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Science

Can you Centralize a Loved One's Trauma? An Examination of the Role of Even Centrality in Recovering from Indirect Trauma Exposure (2021)

W. Willcott-Benoit, Ph.D. student, Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Science

Experiences of Sexual Victimization among Psychology Graduate Students at Field Placements (2021)

A. Palermo, M.A. student, Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Science



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