

2015 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Conference

The 52nd Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) conference was held in Orlando, Florida from March 4th to March 7th. For at least 30 of those 52 years the Criminal Justice National Honor Society, Alpha Phi Sigma, has held their annual conference in tandem with ACJS. Several Washington State University faculty, graduate students and undergraduates attended and presented on panels and roundtables at the conference. ACJS President Brian Payne, his Program Chair (David May), the 2015 Program Committee, the ACJS Executive Board, countless other volunteers who chair panels and run committees, sections and organize events at the meeting, along with Association Manager Cathy Barth and myself created the events with the attendee in mind.

Besides the “work” of the conference – the panels, presentations, workshops, and roundtables – there were section and regional meetings and their respective events (two new sections are under construction: a section on teaching and learning and a section on qualitative methodological approaches). Also there was a book exhibit with over 30 publishers renting booths (several WSU faculty books were on display) and there were numerous receptions sponsored by ACJS and by various schools.

The WSU Department of Criminal Justice and

Criminology and the Division of Governmental Studies and Services program, the latter celebrating its 50th year in operation, hosted a joint reception that was attended by present and past graduate students and undergraduates and faculty and friends of our department and DGSS. Distinguished guests were “retired” Distinguished Professor and former longtime DGSS Director Nicholas P. Lovrich and former Ph.D. graduate and recently appointed National Institute of Justice Director, Nancy Rodriguez. An outstanding time was had by all.

Another highlight of the conference was the presentation by Piper Kerman, author of the book *Orange is the New Black*. Ms. Kerman was introduced by our own Dr. Faith Lutze, and she performed this function so well that the author remarked it was the best introduction she had ever received. A popular TV show is based on Ms. Kerman’s book. Her presentation was attended by hundreds of conference registrants (people were lining the walls of a room that could hold about 300 people). After her moving and highly enlightening speech, Ms. Kerman kindly stayed around to sign her book for over two hours.

Another special feature of this ACJS conference was a doctoral summit. Doctoral students from around the country were invited to attend and ACJS paid for three days of their hotel stay and for several meals and events. The point was to provide some mentoring advice for students who are working to become academics. Our own doctoral student Roger Schaefer attended the summit and found it quite useful and enjoyable. His comment on the conference and the summit, which pretty much reflects the sentiments of many attendees this year, is that it was one of the best conferences he had attended. Next year, the ACJS conference will be in Denver, and we hope to replicate the success of this one, albeit without the Mickey Mouse operation virtually next door!

By Mary K. Stohr, Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at WSU and Executive Director of ACJS.

Enjoy some photos from the event here!

