



Corrections &  
Sentencing

# DCS Spring 2024 Newsletter

Editor: Dr. Colleen Berryessa  
School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

## Division Chair's Corner



**Eileen Ahlin**  
**DCS Chair**

Happy Spring, Everyone! What a great conference we had in November in Philadelphia! We hosted one of our largest breakfasts with over 200 attendees, had a very successful and fun off-site social, raised money for a worthy cause through the art silent auction, honored our award winners, raffled off donated books to our student members, sponsored amazing panels and sessions at the conference, and so much more. Thank you to all who contributed their time and talents to make it possible.

While it feels like we just left Philadelphia, the Board and several Committees have started the behind the scenes work for San Francisco. Part of those plans include DCS awards – exciting things are happening! Coming soon we'll post a call so please consider nominating people for the Lifetime Achievement, Distinguished

Scholar, Distinguished New Scholar, Margueritte Q. Warren and Ted B. Palmer Differential Intervention, Edward J. Latessa Practitioner Research, Distinguished Service, Dissertation Scholarship, Ben Steiner Excellence in Corrections Student Paper, and Dr. Kimchi Memorial Graduate Travel Award. We love to celebrate our members and those working in the corrections and sentencing space. More information on the awards and past winners can be found [here](#) on our website.

We are also seeking nominations for our Executive Board. This year, we are electing for the positions of Vice Chair, Secretary Treasurer, and one Executive Counselor. Please send your nominations (or self-nomination) to Ryan Labrecque ([rlabrecque@rti.org](mailto:rlabrecque@rti.org)) by August 1, 2024. Nominations should include a short bio and statement of interest in the position. For more information on each position, please visit [DCS Constitution](#). As we look forward to ASC, remember to renew your DCS membership and check us out on our socials for up-to-date happenings and announcements: Twitter (@ASC\_DCS), Facebook, and LinkedIn (search ASC Division on Sentencing & Corrections).

Finally, on behalf of the Division, I want to extend heartfelt thanks to Past Chair Shelley Johnson for her steadfast stewardship of DCS and continued commitment to our membership. We all thank you.

---



## ASC Panel Sponsorship

Submitting an exciting panel related to corrections and sentencing for ASC 2024?

**Let us know so DCS can publicize your panel!**

Send the abstract and participants to the 2024 Program Committee Chair at TaLisa J. Carter at [carter@american.edu](mailto:carter@american.edu).

# In This Issue

Division Chair's Corner, 1-2  
ASC Panel Sponsorship, 2  
In This Issue, 3  
ASC Meeting Reminder, 3  
Call for Proposals, 4  
DCS Member Announcements, 5  
Student Research Note, 6-9  
DCS Nominations Reminder, 10  
DCS Resources, 10  
Alt-Ac Corner, 11-12  
The Costs of Diversion, 13-15  
From the Editor, 15

## Annual Meeting Reminder:



**See you in SF  
in November!**



# Call for Proposals

# Penology and Corrections

Series Editor: **Dr Ryan M. Labrecque**, Senior Program Manager, RTI International

## Opportunity to Contribute to a New Series

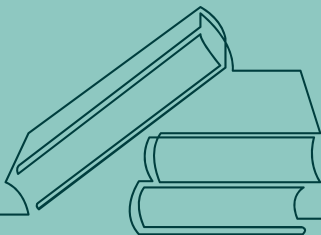


This new series will be a repository for books that address policy-relevant topics broadly falling under the domains of institutional corrections, community corrections, correctional theory and offender rehabilitation. Each book will summarize the current state of knowledge on a correctional topic that is of scholarly and practical importance.

This series will address important policy-relevant correctional issues, including the use and effect of restrictive housing, risk and needs assessment systems and correctional programming. Each work will describe the topic, detail conflicting perspectives, summarize empirical research and discuss the research and policy implications. Books will further focus on ways in which the correctional system can be designed to reduce recidivism and improve other intermediate outcomes, such as education, employment, drug use and program completion.

Bringing together original, innovative and topical books that showcase cutting edge theory and empirical research, the *Penology and Corrections* book series will serve as a focal point around which the field can continue to develop and flourish. Welcoming both monographs and edited volumes, the series will serve as an outlet for exceptional early career researchers and established scholars. It will also provide an avenue for productive collaborations between researchers and practitioners. With an international focus, books in this series will address a wide range of theoretical, methodological and thematic issues.

## Interested in Submitting a Book Proposal?



If you would like to discuss your ideas, please contact the Series Editor, **Dr. Ryan Labrecque** ([rlabrecque@rti.org](mailto:rlabrecque@rti.org)) or the Commissioning Editor for Criminology and Criminal Justice at Routledge, **Morwenna Scott** ([Morwenna.Scott.GB@tandf.co.uk](mailto:Morwenna.Scott.GB@tandf.co.uk))

# DCS Member Announcements



- Dr. Jeffrey Ross (University of Baltimore) published a new book, Introduction to Convict Criminology! Convict criminology (CC) is based on the belief that the convict's voice has been traditionally ignored or marginalized in scholarship and policy debates and that its inclusion can positively impact the fields of corrections, criminology, criminal justice, and policymaking. Designed for students, scholars, and activists worldwide this is the first sole-authored book to comprehensively explain the CC approach to scholarship, teaching, mentorship, and prison and criminal justice activism.
- Dr. Natasha Frost (Northeastern University) is running for ASC president this year and would appreciate DCS's support in her candidacy!
- Dr. Kimberly Collica-Cox (Pace University) published a new book, Women Corrections Executives: The Keys to Reaching the Top! Within corrections, women have made notable impacts in policy, cultural changes, and leadership, yet they have received little attention and study. Based on quantitative and qualitative data, this book fills that gap, examining women in corrections executive positions—their motivations, successes, and challenges.

---

# Student Research Note

## Nitrogen Hypoxia and the Future of Capital Punishment



By Clayton B. Drummond, M.A. ([cdrummo@gmu.edu](mailto:cdrummo@gmu.edu))  
Department of Criminology, Law & Society  
George Mason University

In January 2024, Kenneth Smith became the first person in the U.S. to be executed using nitrogen hypoxia. Smith breathed in pure nitrogen through a mask, causing asphyxiation. [1] Alabama’s execution of Smith has fundamentally changed the landscape of contemporary capital punishment. In this note, I aim to bring the use of nitrogen hypoxia to the attention of scholars and practitioners. I briefly describe the discourse surrounding Smith’s execution, and how we must reckon with nitrogen hypoxia if we are to understand modern capital punishment practices.

### The Execution of Kenneth Smith

Smith’s execution made waves almost immediately. Alabama had previously attempted to execute Smith by lethal injection in 2022, but failed. This failure, alongside others, led Governor Kay Ivey to temporarily pause executions to carry out a “top-to-bottom” review of the process. [2] The pause was brief, and Smith was scheduled to be executed on January 25, 2024; this time, using nitrogen gas. The use of this new method drew critiques from activists and medical professionals [3]. After the execution, witnesses and state actors provided different accounts. In a press conference, Reverend Dr. Jeff Hood—Smith’s spiritual advisor and a death penalty abolitionist—recalled, “We saw minutes of someone heaving back and forth. We saw spit, we saw all sorts of stuff from his mouth develop on the

mask.” [4] Hood wrote, “Kenny was shaking the entire gurney. I had never seen something so violent.” [5] The state’s attorney general, however, pushed back on criticisms of the method, calling it “humane and effective” and stating, “Alabama has achieved something historic.” [6]

## **The Current Status of Nitrogen Hypoxia**

Oklahoma first adopted nitrogen hypoxia in 2015, and Alabama followed in 2018. Mississippi also authorizes it. [7] Since Smith’s execution, policymakers in Louisiana, Kansas, Nebraska, and Ohio have sought to add this new method to their state’s execution protocols. [8] Simply put, support for nitrogen hypoxia has accelerated rather quickly, perhaps due to its use in Alabama. Currently, there are no scheduled executions using nitrogen hypoxia, but Alabama aims to set such a date for Alan Miller, whose 2022 execution failed alongside Smith’s [9].

## **The Path Forward**

We must reckon with this new method of execution. The rich literature on capital punishment in the U.S.—both historic and contemporary—has helped us to understand how the death penalty is applied, its shortcomings, and its impact on society more broadly. The introduction of nitrogen hypoxia shakes the entire foundation of modern punishment practices. It is the first “new method” of execution to be used in the U.S. in more than 40 years, when lethal injection was introduced in the 1980s. Over time, lethal injection has become the default method used throughout the country. Will nitrogen hypoxia become the new norm?

There are many questions surrounding this method of execution, and it merits significant scholarly inquiry. I thus recommend three areas where researchers can advance scholarship in this context. First, research is needed on nitrogen hypoxia as a method of execution. Policymakers are already debating its use, and its

applications are bound to gain further traction in the courts. Second, we need to examine how the introduction of a new method impacts capital punishment discourse. By virtually all accounts, the death penalty has declined in the 21st century. Is this new method capable of sparking an increase in executions? How will it affect public opinion? Third, and relatedly, nitrogen hypoxia adds to a growing list of issues highlighted by abolitionists (e.g., innocence, alternatives, victim opposition). Given the amount of state-level policy changes surrounding the death penalty since the late-aughts, scholars should explore how activists and legislators frame support for and opposition to nitrogen hypoxia. Each of these areas are important for understanding the modern death penalty, both present and future, and would add to an established body of literature surrounding the administration of capital punishment.

## Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Robert Norris for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this research note.

## References and Notes

[1] Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC) (2021). Alabama, Mississippi take preparatory steps to resume executions. Retrieved from <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/news/alabama-mississippi-take-preparatory-steps-to-resume-executions>. For more, see Zivot, J. (2024). A nitrogen gas execution would be unduly cruel. MedPage Today. Retrieved from [https://www.medpagetoday.com/opinion/unchartedterritory/108376?](https://www.medpagetoday.com/opinion/unchartedterritory/108376?trw=no)

trw=no

[2] Hrynkiw, I. (2024). Gov. Kay Ivey orders moratorium on executions in Alabama. AL.com. Retrieved from <https://www.al.com/news/2022/11/gov-kay-ivey-orders-moratorium-on-executions-in-alabama.html> (para. 1).

[3] Action Network (2024). Say NO to nitrogen hypoxia/gas chamber! Retrieved from <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/say-no-to-the-gas-chamber/>. Spady, A. (2024). Alabama readies never-before-used



method that some veterinarians won't even use for pets. CBS News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/alabama-nitrogen-gas-execution-method/>.

[4] Death Penalty Action (2024). Kenneth Smith execution press conference. YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/live/yLyvV2GcagM?si=jdM-INcaWaiqvsRh>.

[5] Hood, J. (2024). I witnessed Alabama execute a man using nitrogen gas. It was horrific and cruel. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2024/02/19/alabama-execution-nitrogen-gas-witness-cruel-torture/72616304007/> (para. 10).

[6] Attorney General Steve Marshall (2024). Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall statement on the execution of murderer Kenneth Smith by nitrogen hypoxia. Retrieved from <https://www.alabamaag.gov/alabama-attorney-general-steve-marshall-statement-on-the-execution-of-murderer-kenneth-smith-by-nitrogen-hypoxia/> (para. 5).

[7] Brandes, H. (2015). Oklahoma adopts nitrogen as possible execution method. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0N82EE/>. See DPIC at [1].

[8] Bamer, E. (2024). Painless or inhumane? Nebraska lawmakers debate using nitrogen hypoxia for death penalty. Omaha World-Herald. Retrieved from [https://omaha.com/news/state-regional/government-politics/painless-or-inhumane-nebraska-lawmakers-debate-using-nitrogen-hypoxia-for-death-penalty/article\\_0a6fe6b2-d649-11ee-acdd-f3f173e09ec2.html](https://omaha.com/news/state-regional/government-politics/painless-or-inhumane-nebraska-lawmakers-debate-using-nitrogen-hypoxia-for-death-penalty/article_0a6fe6b2-d649-11ee-acdd-f3f173e09ec2.html);

Carpenter, T. (2024). Attorney general in Kansas sponsors bill adding hypoxia option for executing capital murderers. Kansas Reflector. Retrieved from

<https://kansasreflector.com/2024/02/09/attorney-general-in-kansas-sponsors-bill-adding-hypoxia-option-for-executing-capital-murderers/>;

Trau, M., & Shaw, C. (2024). Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost promotes bill to start using nitrogen gas for executions. News 5 Cleveland. Retrieved from <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/state/after-alabama-pioneers-nitrogen-gas-execution-ohio-may-be-poised-to-follow>;

Woodruff, E (2024) Nitrogen hypoxia is Louisiana's new, controversial execution method. How does it kill? NOLA.com. Retrieved from [https://www.nola.com/news/courts/nitrogen-hypoxia-louisiana/article\\_afa98958-dbfd-11ee-9d48-83e847a85f67.html](https://www.nola.com/news/courts/nitrogen-hypoxia-louisiana/article_afa98958-dbfd-11ee-9d48-83e847a85f67.html)

[9] Dev, S. (2024). Alabama seeks to perform second execution using nitrogen hypoxia. CBS News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/alabama-nitrogen-hypoxia-execution-alan-eugene-miller/>

---

# DCS Nominations Reminder



This a reminder that we will solicit nominations for new board members and division awards in the summer! Please visit the [DCS website](#) for more information.

## Board Positions

Vice President

Secretary/Treasurer

Executive Counselor (One)

## Awards

Pamela K. Lattimore and RTI International Dissertation Award

Ben Steiner Excellence in Corrections Student Paper Award

Distinguished New Scholar Award

Distinguished Scholar Award

Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Kimchi Memorial Graduate Travel Award

Edward J. Latessa Practitioner Research Award

Lifetime Achievement Award

Marguerite Q. Warren and Ted B. Palmer Differential Intervention Award

---



## DCS Resources!

YouTube Channel: [https://youtube.com/@ASCDCS?  
si=xmqPjyx-M\\_RkEyX9](https://youtube.com/@ASCDCS?si=xmqPjyx-M_RkEyX9)

Alt-Ac Workshop Series: [https://ascdcs.org/alternative-  
academic-careers-workshop-series/](https://ascdcs.org/alternative-academic-careers-workshop-series/)

# AltAc Corner

In this issue we are excited to continue our “Exploring the Space” series with government careers. We’re also back to bust some myths that arise comparing Alt-Ac to academic careers.

## EXPLORING THE SPACE: GOVERNMENT CAREERS

### **Defining the Space:**

Government agencies are public institutions that serve and uphold the interests of the communities, regions, or the nation. Professionals in government roles perform diverse tasks, such as policymaking, administration, and public service. Government careers offer opportunities to shape policies, influence positive change, and contribute to the betterment of society at a local or national level.

Frequently described as: *Public Service-Focused; Bureaucratic; Policy Oriented; Multifaceted; Traditional*

### **When should I start applying for Government jobs?**

Obtaining a government job can take time. It commonly takes from 4 weeks to 4 months to get through the hiring process (sometimes longer). It is beneficial to start applying for government positions several months prior to when you’d like to start working. Additionally, application systems can be finicky; make sure to follow instructions closely and fill in the digital forms (rather than only attaching your resume).

### QUICK FACTS

- **Pace of Work:** Slow-paced, busy during elections and legislative sessions
- **Compensation:** Hard money, \$ - \$\$\$\$\$
- **Job Security:** Secure
- **Work Schedule:** Based on a 40 hour work week; 8-5 expected; almost always in-person
- **Examples from Our Rockstar Career Series:** Jen Weintraub; Dr. Marie Garcia; Dr. Kyleigh Clark-Moorman



### RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

**Going Alt-Ac: A Guide to Alternative Academic Careers**  
by Kathryn E. Linder, Kevin Kelly,  
and Thomas J. Tobin (2020)

This highly practical book offers tools and prompts for readers who are:

- Considering whether to choose an alt-ac career path
- Seeking specific alt-ac positions
- Advising graduate students or mentoring recent professional graduates
- Encountering alt-ac career challenges

### **What types of roles does the government offer?**

- data/research analyst
- data scientist
- research scientist
- policy advisor/analyst
- legislative analyst/advisor
- program analyst/manager

### **Where can I find government jobs?**

There are several places to search for government jobs, including:

- Governmentjobs.com
- USA jobs
- LinkedIn
- loc.gov
- Agency specific websites

# MYTH BUSTING

## MYTH

## REALITY

**Alt-Ac Careers Are for Those Who Couldn't Get Tenure-Track Positions**

01 ➔

Pursuing an Alt-Ac career doesn't mean that you have failed. In fact, Alt-Ac roles offer diverse opportunities beyond traditional tenure-track careers. Many highly skilled individuals intentionally choose Alt-Ac paths due to their interests, skills, or lifestyle preferences.

**Alt-Ac Jobs Are Less Stable or Secure Than Academic Roles**

02 ➔

Alt-Ac positions may not follow a traditional tenure model, but certainly offer stability. With limited tenure-track opportunities, Alt-Ac careers may offer more security or opportunities for promotion. Institutions like government agencies, nonprofits, think tanks, and museums all seek expertise and offer competitive pay, stable employment, and benefits.

**Alt-Ac Jobs Are Less Fulfilling Than Traditional Academic Roles**

03 ➔

Alt-Ac careers can be highly fulfilling. They allow individuals to apply their expertise in diverse ways, such as managing projects, advising government, and creating or evaluating programs. Alt-Ac professionals find satisfaction in making a tangible impact on policies, public institutions, and communities.

**Alt-Ac Jobs Miss Out on the Experience of Teaching**

04 ➔

While Alt-Ac professionals may not teach in a traditional classroom setting, they engage in various forms of teaching and technical assistance work. Alt-Ac professionals frequently lead workshops and trainings for the government, universities, and community organizations.

## STAY IN TOUCH



Have an Alt-Ac job you want to share?  
Recently accepted an Alt-Ac job? Got a promotion?  
Let us know by sending us an email!



**Subscribe to our Listserv:**

[dcs.studentgroup@gmail.com](mailto:dcs.studentgroup@gmail.com)

**OR**

[alt-academic-workshop-subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:alt-academic-workshop-subscribe@googlegroups.com)

**Visit the AltAc Team's Webpage:**

<http://ascdcs.org/alternative-academic-careers-workshop-series/>

# The Costs of Diversion: Exploring the Multifaceted Impact of Fee Elimination in Philadelphia

Dr. Clare Strange ([cs3846@drexel.edu](mailto:cs3846@drexel.edu)) and Dr. Jordan Hyatt ([jmh498@drexel.edu](mailto:jmh498@drexel.edu))

Drexel University

Dr. Nathan Link ([nathan.link@rutgers.edu](mailto:nathan.link@rutgers.edu))

Rutgers University - Camden

A new evaluation in Philadelphia explores how legal financial obligations (LFOs; e.g., fines, fees, restitution, costs/surcharges) impact the flow of cases to and through Pennsylvania's primary prosecutor-led pretrial diversion program for adults: Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD). ARD targets defendants with limited criminal histories, who often exhibit some sort of treatment need. If accepted into one of the two program tracks (DUI-specific or non-DUI), participants are placed under community supervision and must comply with a series of conditions for a period of between six months and two years. The conditions for completion include the payment of program costs and outstanding LFOs. At the end of the program, participants' ARD-related arrests and criminal charges are expunged.

A recent study by a team funded by the MacArthur Foundation tracked a cohort (June 2018 - October 2019) of these diversionary cases and uncovered disparities regarding the rates of ARD acceptance and completion, and the downstream effects of these trends on expungement (Diversion Workgroup, 2020). Particularly, the group highlighted racial disparities in these outcomes and suggested that the LFOs associated with diversionary programming (e.g., assessments, treatment, and classes) are a key barrier. Black defendants in particular were found to complete the program at lower rates than participants of other races, and took longer to complete ARD when successful. These findings raised concerns about the impacts of LFOs on diversion program outcomes and disparities and inspired citywide

calls for high-quality research in this area.

Launched in February 2024 with support from Arnold Ventures and the City of Philadelphia, the Drexel/Rutgers University-Camden research team is evaluating an LFO relief pilot program using a causal research design. The experiment will help isolate the impacts of LFOs on program completion, charge expungement, and other interrelated outcomes that are outside of the justice context (e.g., employment, health, financial well-being). Planned surveys and interviews with ARD participants will bring additional context to the results of the outcome evaluation. The study relies on a high level of cooperation and support from its many stakeholders: Assistant District Attorneys who extend invitations to potential ARD participants, public defenders who represent the participants, practitioners and administrative staff from local service agencies who manage payments for mandated programs, court administrators who process payments for fines, costs, and restitution, probation officers who monitor participants' progress through a period of community supervision, and an advisory board who provides input on study design and data collection.

An essential arm of the study is rooted in implementation science and will detail the eligibility criteria and processes associated with the flow of cases through ARD (Strange, Hyatt, Link, & Powell, 2023), with help from stakeholders. This process evaluation will help to characterize the findings of the outcome evaluation and determine whether fee elimination is a plausible policy choice in Philadelphia and beyond. Other aspects of the project seek to systematically catalog the sources of LFOs within the jurisdiction and the geospatial distribution and impact of LFO debt across neighborhoods.

As of mid-April 2024, the study has nearly 100 enrolled participants and has directly relieved over \$20,000 in LFO debt. Enrollment will continue

for roughly 15 months in anticipation of approximately 1,400 study participants. Results of the evaluation will be shared with researchers and policymakers in and beyond Philadelphia and will ideally inform discussions about opportunities for appropriate policy reforms.

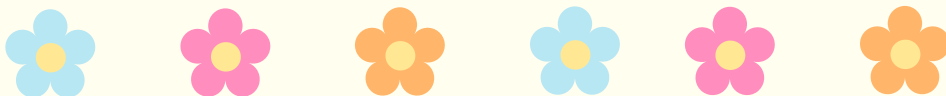
## References

Diversion Workgroup. (2020). Philadelphia site of MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Study.

Strange, C., Hyatt, J., Link, N., & Powell, K. (2023). Financial obligations within diversionary programs: Critical issues and innovative strategies. *Perspectives: The Journal of the American Probation and Parole Association*, 47(2), 38-44.

---

# From the Editor



**Colleen Berryessa**  
**DCS Vice Chair**

Happy Spring from Brooklyn! It was so great to see so many of you in Philly last Fall and we are quickly approaching the 6-month mark to the next ASC meeting in San Francisco (where I am from originally) – time has flown! At that meeting, I will end my tenure as Vice Chair, and I really encourage everyone to consider nominating themselves or a colleague to serve in one of the open board positions. I’ve had a fabulous time being on the board and it is a great way to get involved with DCS if you’ve been interested in finding a way to contribute. Until the Fall newsletter and ASC – I hope everyone has a cool and relaxing summer break!