

Justice Studies

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

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FACULTY ACTIVITY



Real-Life Crime Analysis: Melissa Beddow

On July 2, 2008 a woman was on the phone with her mother inside her home in Prescott, Ariz. when she was attacked by an unknown assailant. Her mother called the police, who responded to find her dead. The Yavapai County Sheriff's Office suspected her recently divorced husband as the assailant. He was arrested and charged with murder.

The crime scene investigation produced circumstantial evidence at best and no identifiable fingerprints were recovered from the scene. A significant amount of male DNA was found underneath the victim's fingernails; however it is not consistent with the ex-husband's DNA profile. There is no other DNA evidence to indicate the ex-husband was at the crime scene. His trial ended in a mistrial due to the presiding judge falling ill and dying. Jury selection for the new trial will begin soon.

While reviewing the prosecution's DNA analysis documents, I was able to identify a conclusion that was incorrectly stated in a report that the defendant's DNA might be present on an item. As a DNA expert I am only qualified to discuss DNA evidence, and the DNA evidence shows that the defendant was not present in the house the night of the murder.

The GCU Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science program lays the educational groundwork for students to pursue a career in this or any forensic science field. Students learn DNA analysis, toxicology, forensic chemistry, crime scene processing and evidence handling. Students with an interest in forensic science are welcome to join the Lopes Justice Society: Forensic Science Club. The club participates in local and national tours, crime scene competitions and philanthropic opportunities. Meetings are weekly on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to noon in Tell 118.

ASSITANT DEAN'S MESSAGE



As GCU made the decision to combine the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Health Sciences at the end of the spring semester 2011, it united two areas of the academic world at GCU. This decision opened the door for some positive movement in the area of Justice Studies. The Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies was designed around police, corrections, and the legal system, with the underlying theme of justice and peace found in the Bible. Our Master of Science in Justice Studies mirrors the same components with emphases in legal studies and corrections. A few years ago, courses in crime scene analysis were added for ground students. They included lab components in which students learned to do such things as photograph crime scenes, lift fingerprints for identification and comparison, and analyze accident scenes. The new connection with the College of Science has strengthened the crime analysis

component and this semester a companion degree, Bachelor of Science in Forensics has been developed.

Our full time faculty members in this area are **Cornel Stenley**, whose forte is police and corrections, and **Melissa Beddow**, whose forte is forensics. In January 2012, these two will be joined by **John N. Moore**, whose background is in law, having served as a prosecutor and defense attorney.



*Anna Faith Smith,
Assistant Dean*

We are anticipating our next milestone, the opening of our new Arts and Sciences classroom building which will house new state-of-the-art labs for DNA analysis and toxicology. If you want to know more, do not hesitate to contact Cornel, John, or Melissa.

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By: Anna Faith Smith

Coraima Portillo, a freshman majoring in Forensic Science, was attracted to GCU for two reasons: it is a Christian school and it has the major she wants. Her goal is to work for the FBI, doing criminal investigations. She says she has always been interested in investigations and is excited about working at the federal level. Coraima is motivated to succeed partially

by the fact that she has two younger brothers who look to her as a role-model. It is important for her to set a good example for them and to succeed in her chosen profession.

Even as a freshman, she is already involved in the Justice Society and will be a part of the Forensic Science club when it starts soon. She especially enjoys learning about crime scene investigations

outside of class and participating in the Ladies' Night Out at the shooting range (see attached picture). Keep an eye out for her. She will be making an impression as a GCU alumnus soon.



Coraima Portillo

ALUMNI NEWS: STACIE JONES

Stacie Jones came to GCU in August of 2010 determined to finish her BS in Justice Studies as quickly as possible. She took an overload for two semesters and then 16 more hours in the summer in order

to complete her degree by August of 2011. She attributes her success at such a difficult task to her passion for learning and the small class sizes at GCU that allowed her to have direct contact with her teachers. Since she graduated, she has been volunteering at the Adobe Mountain Detention Center, mentoring and tutoring the young female students who live there. They are referred to as "youth at risk" as opposed to juvenile delinquents or inmates. Although Stacie would like to continue her education as soon as possible, her current passion is helping the students because she "knows there is a chance to help them better themselves." Stacie hopes to become a juvenile probation or probation officer or counselor because she believes that the students can become well-adjusted adults if they can learn to trust people.



By John N. Moore

The Grand Canyon University Mock Trial team sprang into action in October in anticipation of head-to-head competition in December against the University of Arizona. This competition will prepare the team for the Regional competition in Los Angeles in February, 2012 going up against teams such as Air Force, California, UCLA, USC, and ASU.

The team has 15 current members but is still looking for mental talent from any college within GCU. The case that they will be arguing, *Midlands v. Dawson*, is a criminal case of murder rising out of a fatal traffic accident.

Michael Schofield, Club President, said, "We have been meeting at least three times per week to prepare. In many ways this case is more difficult than any class we are taking. We know that the competition will be fierce." The club meets at various times and places during the week depending on the function of the trial that the team is working on. If you would like to join, the formal meetings are Tuesday at 4 pm in COE 108.



Mock Trial Competition

UPCOMING EVENTS

12/19/11 – 1/8/12 Christmas Break – no classes

Regular meetings:

- Ladies' Night Out – monthly details to be announced
- Justice Society meeting – to be determined
- Mock Trial meeting in COE 108 Tuesday 4 – 5 p.m.
- LSAT prep course in CON 201 Wednesday 4 – 5 p.m.
- Forensic Science Club meeting in Tell 118 Tuesdays 11 a.m. to noon

Special upcoming dates:

- Tour of Glendale Public Safety Training Facility – to be determined
- Ben Avery Shooting Range Day – to be determined
- Mock trial local competition with U of A in December
- Mock trial Regional Competition in Los Angeles in February 2012
- 'Lopes Justice Society Crime Scene Investigation/Firearm/Physical Fitness

Collegiate Competition – Cincinnati, Ohio – March 11 – 16 2012

BIBLE VERSE AND TIPS



Bible Verse: Isaiah 30:18 (NIV)

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you;
He rises to show you compassion.
For the Lord is a God of justice.
Blessed are all who wait for him!

Tips for success:

Job search success: Many people are searching for a job now. Present yourself in a confident and positive light, networking as you go.

Online teaching success: Check the QFI often to make sure no one has a question of general interest for the class.

Online learning success: Make sure you have cited all your sources properly. Prepare your assignments early enough to improve them if you get a high similarity report when you send them through Turnitin.