Message from the Director

I became the Director to the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies (CrimSL) in January 2017. It took very little time to settle in and to realize that CrimSL is a great place to be. It is intellectually vibrant, collegial, and full of energy and commitment - but you don’t have to take my word for it.

In February 2018, a team of three academics from Canadian and US universities visited CrimSL to conduct an external review. Their report canvassed CrimSL’s domestic and international reputation in criminology and sociolegal scholarship, the calibre of its faculty and students, and the quality of its graduate and undergraduate programs.

The reviewers describe CrimSL as “one of the world’s foremost research centres in criminology and sociolegal studies”. Our faculty is prolific and accomplished, and the scholarship we produce “is positioned at the leading edge of international research.” Our varied quantitative, qualitative and theoretical contributions serve to “advance both theoretical and empirical understanding of complex social phenomena and their impact on thinking about, and the experience of, justice in Toronto, Canada, the United States and other locations around the globe.”

The reviewers commended the quality and diversity of our undergraduate and graduate student body and were impressed by the breadth of our curriculum, especially in light of our small faculty complement. They noted CrimSL’s recent addition of courses focusing on Indigenous peoples and criminal justice, and Indigenous law, and our efforts to expand experiential learning opportunities. The reviewers recommended, and we agree, that CrimSL continue to develop these initiatives.

An especially gratifying observation by the reviewers concerned the culture of CrimSL: “the evident collegiality of the Centre’s members, a mostly unsolicited matter confirmed uniformly by our meetings.” This recognition of the CrimSL as a supportive community of faculty, instructors, librarian, students, and staff is crucial to understanding CrimSL’s past and present success as a place where people want to work, study and engage (see page 12 for more highlights).

Every year, CrimSL welcomes academic visitors from Canada and abroad. In the past year, we have been delighted to host Phil Girard (Osgoode), Paula Maurutto (UTM), Lisa Monchalin (Kwantlen Polytechnic), Yannis Gansel (Lyon), as well as several visiting graduate students. They enrich the life of our community, and benefit from the opportunity to interact with our faculty and doctoral students.

Like all institutions, people come and go. They retire, graduate, move on to other opportunities and so on. Professor Rosemary Gartner retired a year ago, but we have the good fortune that she continues to teach in our graduate program, as does our other emeritus professor, Tony Doob. In July 2019, our newest colleague, Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu, will take up an Assistant Professor appointment at CrimSL. Ayo recently obtained his PhD at UCLA and is currently doing a post-doc at John Jay College in New York. Wilhelmina Peter, our Business Officer and Assistant to the Director, retired after years of service to University of Toronto and CrimSL. We miss her! But we have been delighted to welcome in her place Maria Wowk, who began in July and is a wonderful asset to CrimSL (for more arrivals and departures see page 4 and page 6). In the past year, we have also hired Caitlin MacLeod as our communications officer, and if you are reading this newsletter, you are already seeing her talent in action. In the coming months, you may notice further changes to our website, our posters, and our social media (see page 11 for what’s in store).

As we head into another year at CrimSL, I am also thrilled to announce that Senator Murray Sinclair, Chairman of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, will deliver the Edwards Lecture on 19 November 2018. See page 7 for more details.
Introducing...

Our new doctoral students

Fernando Avila

Originally from Catamarca, Argentina, Fernando’s work centres around power and order in prisons. Fernando’s current research explores the experience of punishment and relations of power in a Latin American prison in Uruguay called “Punta de Rieles”.

Tyler Joseph King

Tyler is interested in theories of responsibility, guilt and remorse, particularly in relation to how these concepts are being influenced and shifted by modern “truth-seeking” technologies (such as fMRI scans). Prior to completing his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice at Ryerson University, Tyler was an infantry reservist with the Canadian Armed Forces. He also has experience in private intelligence/investigations, and remains a licensed private investigator in the province of Ontario.

Daniel Konikoff

Daniel served as the Editor-in-Chief of the University of Toronto Undergraduate Criminology Review, and has presented research on social media and police violence at graduate conferences across Ontario. Daniel has conducted research with the Atypical Homicide Research Group, and currently volunteers for the John Howard Society’s Centre of Research, Policy & Program Development, where he has assisted with projects on bail reform and police record checks.

Kadija Lodge-Tulloch

Kadija is interested in reintegration programming, restorative justice and offender reentry. Her desire is to bring awareness to issues surrounding post-incarceration reintegration programming for marginalized and racialized individuals. Through her academic endeavours, her aim is to develop policy-relevant Canadian scholarship around this issue, thus contributing to the development of evidence-based program design and evaluation strategies that addresses the needs of this population.

Jona Zyfi

Jona completed her MA at CrimSL in 2016 and has returned to continue her research under the supervision of Audrey Macklin. Born in Albania and raised in Australia, her research interests focus on artificial intelligence and machine-learning algorithms in relation to immigration regulation, refugee protection, and the intersections of citizenship, belonging and human rights. She is currently a research assistant for a project examining private refugee sponsorship from a sponsor’s perspective and is part of a group sponsoring a Syrian family to Toronto.

Our new Business Officer

Maria Wowk

Maria joined us in July 2018 as Business Officer/Assistant to the Director. Maria has been at U of T for fifteen years, in a variety of positions and locations, including the Faculty of Medicine and, most recently, Geography. She brings a wealth of experience and talent in relation to administration and financial management, and we are very glad to have her!
New Doctors!

Katharina Maier  
August 2018

“Half Way to Freedom: The Role of Half-way Houses in Canada’s Penal Landscape”

Supervisor: Professor Rosemary Gartner

Dr. Maier is now an Assistant Professor in Criminal Justice at the University of Winnipeg

Brenna Keatinge  
September 2018

“Growing Land, Growing Law: Race, Urban Politics, and the Governance of Vacant Land in Boston from 1950”

Supervisor: Professor Mariana Valverde

Edwards Lecture

Congratulations to CrimSL’s newest doctors, who have defended their theses and embarked on exciting next steps

Senator Murray Sinclair  
The Accidental Jurist: Thoughts on a life in the law

Senator Sinclair graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba in 1979 and was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1980. In the course of his legal practice, he became known for his representation of Indigenous people and his knowledge of Indigenous legal issues. He was appointed Associate Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba in March of 1988 and, shortly thereafter, was appointed Co-Commissioner of Manitoba’s Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, with Court of Queen’s Bench Associate Chief Justice A. C. Hamilton. In November 2000, Senator Sinclair completed the Report of the Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Inquest, and in January 2001, he was appointed to the Court of Queen’s Bench of Manitoba. In 2009, while a judge of the Court of Queen’s Bench of Manitoba, Senator Sinclair was appointed to Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Since his appointment to the Senate in 2016, Senator Sinclair has sat on the Senate Standing Committees on Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples, Fisheries and Oceans, Legal and Constitutional Issues, Rules, and Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. In 2017, he was appointed by the Ontario Civilian Police Commission to investigate the Thunder Bay Police Services Board. On Monday, November 19, 2018, CrimSL will be honoured to host Senator Sinclair, who will deliver this year’s Edwards Memorial Lecture. This fall marks the 20th anniversary of the John L. J. Edwards Lecture, delivered in honour of the Centre’s founder, Professor John L. J. Edwards. The lecture is presented by the Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies, the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, and Woodsworth College.

JD/PhD

Starting 2018-2019 academic year, CrimSL is offering a new combined JD/PhD in partnership with the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. Like the combined JD/MA, this program cultivates inter-disciplinary approaches to the study of criminal justice and social regulation, and reflects the many important ties that link CrimSL and U of T Law.

The JD/PhD allows students to complete both degrees in six years, rather than the seven years it would take to attain them individually. As is the case in the JD/MA, the first year of the JD/PhD is made up entirely of JD courses completed at the Faculty of Law. In the second year of the program, students complete the four half courses that make up the coursework requirements for the PhD in Criminology and Sociolegal Studies. In years three and four, students complete their remaining JD credits, their PhD comprehensive exam, and their dissertation proposal, and in years five and six, complete their PhD thesis and any remaining PhD program requirements.
This June, Toronto saw the largest ever gathering of international socio-legal scholars at a joint meeting of the US-based Law and Society Association and the Canadian Law and Society Association. By all accounts, the meeting was a great success, and many international scholars commented especially favourably on the integration of Indigenous issues and Indigenous legal traditions throughout the program.

Many people in and around CrimSL played important roles in organizing the meeting, with Audrey Macklin serving as chair of the local arrangements committee, Sida Liu preparing professional development workshops and events throughout the program, and Ashley Rubin organizing a workshop for junior scholars that met the day before the meetings. Mariana Valverde served as program chair on behalf of both of the host associations, a time-consuming job that started at last year’s Mexico City meeting. The program chair has a committee that does much of the work of forming panels out of individual submissions, organizes the mini-plenaries, and chooses the keynote speaker—this year Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella. Much of the work of revising the program to reflect drop-outs and other changes falls to the program chair, but fortunately, both LSA presidents were willing to offer considerable help at a moment’s notice.

The close collaboration between the two associations was one of the highlights of the conference. Past joint meetings have often featured sessions made up solely of one country’s scholars; this year, the program committee, the program chair and the two presidents worked hard to create as many truly international panels as possible. The internationalization of panels and workshops was not limited to American-Canadian exchanges. In recent years, LSA meetings have attracted increasing numbers of scholars from countries outside of North America and Europe, such as Brazil and China. Putting these scholars in conversation with Canadians created wonderful new connections and opportunities.

There were of course problems. Canadian embassies and consulates abroad, especially in Africa, proved less than willing to issue visas to scholars wanting to travel to Toronto, and in many cases organizers did not know about the visa denials with sufficient time to contest the decisions. Going forward, it is clear that international scholarly gatherings will have to be very proactive regarding visas; it is not only Trump’s USA that presents problems for such gatherings. There were also in-the-moment difficulties, and workshops was not limited to American-Canadian exchanges. In recent years, LSA meetings have attracted increasing numbers of scholars from countries outside of North America and Europe, such as Brazil and China. Putting these scholars in conversation with Canadians created wonderful new connections and opportunities.

At the LSA awards ceremony, Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu, who will be joining the Centre in July 2019 as an assistant professor, was awarded the 2018 Law and Society Association Graduate Student Paper Prize for “Coffee Shops and Street Stops: Policing Practices in Gentrifying Neighborhoods.” This award is presented to the graduate student paper that best represents outstanding law and society research.
such as the fire alarm going off at the conference venue during the four mini-plenaries. Despite the bumps along the way—inevitable when largely volunteer organizations take on major events—those who attended were overwhelmingly positive about the conference and, indeed, about Toronto as a gathering place. Local scholars participated in large numbers—especially graduate students, who do not always have funding to attend conferences elsewhere—and the already close bonds between the Canadian association and the LSA were definitely strengthened.

Professor Mariana Valverde

“Making Enemies: Military Justice, Civilian Protesters and ‘Treason Against the Homeland’ in Venezuela,” by Giancarlo Fiorella


“Halfway House Residency, Reentry, and Desistance: The Narratives of Indigenous Ex-Prisoners,” by Katharina Maier

“Implicating the state: the production and authorization of Indigenous people’s social histories in Canada, from Indian Agents to Gladue Reports,” by Jacque Briggs

“Power and order in a non-traditional prison. The case of Punta de Rieles prison in Uruguay,” by Fernando Avila

“The Queen’s Red Children: Commissions, Law & Empire in Canada,” by Mayana Slobodian

“Old Age and Law in the British Empire” by Professor Catherine Evans

“Police unionism and ‘lawfare’ in postcolonial India” by Professor Beatrice Jauregui

“Property as a Site of Colonial Contestation: The Legal Form and the Legality of Anti-Colonial Protest” by Professor Honor Brabazon

“Police, Politics, and Demobilization: Exploring Policy Feedback Effects in Britain” by Dr. Ayobami Laniyonu

As members of the CrimSL community, we get to see the exceptional research and accomplishments of the Centre and its faculty, students, and alumni up close. My goal as Communications Officer is to help spread the reach of those activities beyond the Centre, to people and organizations with whom CrimSL’s research and expertise would resonate, but who may not have heard of our small unit.

CrimSL has an impressive culture of public engagement through government and public policy participation, media interviews, public speaking and more. New communications channels like the Twitter account, @CrimSL_TO, aggregate the many different places that members of the CrimSL community appear, as a central point of reference for anyone curious about the Centre, and further disseminate the materials to connect with people who do not yet know about us.

As the communications role continues to develop, I would welcome anyone organizing events or other projects to reach out to discuss aspects of communications strategy, including audience, visual materials, and social media engagement, as part of your planning process. And of course, I warmly encourage all members of the CrimSL community to continue to get in touch with events, publications and other activities they would like to have shared.

Visitors to the CrimSL website will have noticed some changes over the past few months in anticipation of a shift to a brand new website. A particular focus has been building new individual profile pages for CrimSL’s doctoral students. These are meant to be tools for students to disseminate their work and to promote themselves by bringing together research interests, educational and professional experience, publications, projects, and more in a cohesive portrait with the institutional support of the Centre and U of T.

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The conference program featured varied research by CrimSL PhDs and faculty
On our reputation

“The Centre has over the decades of its existence deservedly enjoyed a reputation as one of the world’s foremost research centres in criminology and sociolegal studies. The significance of that strength should not be overlooked, since there are no similar research centres that have over such a protracted period been globally renowned for extending frontiers of both focus areas.”

This February, CrimSL was visited by Professor George Pavlich (Department of Sociology, University of Alberta), Professor Sally E. Merry (Department of Anthropology, New York University), and Professor Delores Jones-Brown (Department of Law, Police Science and John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York) as part of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Review Process (UTQAP). Over the course of the two days, Professors Pavlich, Merry, and Jones-Brown met with students, faculty and staff to learn about CrimSL and its academic programs.

The reviewers’ report, based on these meetings and the self-study document prepared by the Centre, recognizes many of the things that we at CrimSL are so proud of. While the report itself is not intended as a public document, we are pleased to share some of the reviewers’ comments here.

Many thanks are due to the reviewers for their comments and recommendations, and to all of the members of the CrimSL community for their participation in the review process.

On the graduate programs

“Graduate programs offer rigorous courses and a culture of broad supervision as well as mentorship for graduate students. Graduate students commented on the willingness of all faculty to assist them to think through research problems that was facilitated by the way in which Faculty and Graduate students are accommodated on the same floor.”

On the undergraduate programs

“One of the Centre’s strengths is the collegiality, professionalism, and positive morale reflected by those who we met. We encountered a tangible sense that faculty, staff, and students identify closely with the Centre, and this adds to their experiences at the University of Toronto.”

On our community

“The Centre has succeeded … in providing exceptional, interdisciplinary, undergraduate programing that engages students in the critical and creative analysis of both fields”