

# NEWSLETTER

**2020**  
FALL

## FIRE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Firefighters never work remotely. So, while the plan for much of the U.S. was stay home and stay safe, our Fire Science students, alumni and faculty have had to step up to the call of duty during the pandemic. In addition to their normal response duties, firefighters have implemented new policies, procedures, and protocols to protect themselves, their families and the citizenry of their communities from COVID-19.

For example, Bergen County, N.J. has had over 22,000 COVID-19 cases (2,000 deaths), many in and around the Teaneck area. However, Teaneck — one of the first and hardest hit cities in the state — has two of our Fire Science professors at the helm: Chief Jordan Zaretsky and Battalion Chief Rich Burchell each played a critical role in helping the Teaneck Fire Department manage the challenge.

In emergency situations, disaster can happen quickly, and fire departments need to respond. It takes leadership — and that is exactly what these NJCU Fire Science professors did. It is what we profess in our program.... the importance of leadership!

To keep the citizens and visitors of Teaneck safe, the fire department command staff acted quickly. They created a FEMA

Incident Command System (ICS) Level II response incident (#20-602) and followed the recommended ICS procedures in order to track and document all critical information. Frequent Zoom briefings allowed them to lead through the crisis and facilitated communication of new department policies necessary to keep personnel safe. Many department members stated that they felt safer at work than anywhere else during the early part of the crisis, thanks — in part — to the decisions and communication made by leadership.

Collaboration between agencies is a key factor in crisis response, and the Teaneck Fire Department — through relationships built at NJCU — was able to help fire departments statewide with pandemic preparedness. Our Fire Science department has long believed in the power of relationships that work together for the betterment of the state of New Jersey, and this COVID-19 time has been no exception.

“We would like to thank NJCU, the Dean’s Office of the College of Professional Studies, and the Fire Science Department for their critical support during this trying time,” Chiefs Zaretsky and Burchell stated.

## FITNESS, EXERCISE, & SPORTS

### New Exercise Science Laboratory and Studio

The Fitness, Exercise and Sports Department is now offering a wide variety of theory, activity, and lab sessions in the new Exercise Science Laboratory and Studio. Both rooms are equipped to provide an enriching and innovative theoretical and practical experience not only to the Exercise Science students, but to the university and to the community as well.

Besides testing ergometers, new fitness and first aid equipment, motor learning devices, and body composition analyzers, the lab is also equipped with a Biodex Balance System that will be used for teaching, laboratories, and research on athletes and clinical populations. A virtual tour of the NJCU Exercise Science Laboratory will be available soon.



## PROFESSIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

### Grant for NSA Cyber Security Education Diversity Initiative

Drs. Thakur and Alhayajneh’s sub-Award Grant Proposal with Fordham University for the NSA Cyber Security Education Diversity Initiative (CEDI) 2020 has been select-

ed for two years. Our grant budget is around \$180,000. It is an excellent opportunity for NJCU and our Cyber Security program!

### Professional Security Studies Professor Trains and Lectures on Resilience

In March 2019, Dr. Michael Wiltsey helped train approximately 187 law enforcement officers across the state as Master Resilience Trainers. In addition, he and his colleague Dr. C. Gabrielle Salfati from John Jay College of Criminal Justice initiated and are doing a cross-institution collaboration on a research study on the impact of the resilience training on individual and organizational outcome factors. Dr. Wiltsey will be presenting an overview of the New Jersey program at the

Police Resilience Symposium which was held virtually from September 22 through September 24, 2020. The symposium was co-hosted by NYPD, Columbia University, and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. Dr. Wiltsey will also co-author a presentation titled with his research collaborator and graduate students from John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the upcoming Society for Police and Criminal Psychology annual conference, being held online November 5-7 2020.



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWS: COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING IN THE COURTS

**Dr. Esther Nir, Department of Criminal Justice**

I am excited to be a part of NJCU’s initiative to create and expand community engaged learning opportunities on campus. Over the past few years, in conjunction with my work in faculty fellows, I developed a partnership between NJCU and the Jersey City Supervising Superior Court judge to provide our students with community engaged learning opportunities in the court system. I work closely with Hudson County’s Assignment Judge Peter F. Bariso Jr. to create and sustain a program designed to engage politically disenfranchised students in governance and to provide experiential learning experiences in dynamic courtroom spaces. To date, over 200 of my students (honors students, mock trial team members, and Criminal Justice students) have participated in this program. Up until this semester, students have travelled to courthouses in New Jersey, observed and journaled courtroom experiences, and participated in a variety of mock trial experiences in court (including arguing in the well of the courtroom with a Superior Court judge presiding and providing feedback). This semester, through coordination with the judiciary, I have moved this program online; students watch courtroom proceedings in a variety of live online platforms; judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys join our zoom class as guest speakers, and student are presented with several opportunities to ask judges and other court actors questions over zoom (I attached a picture of my CEL class in Judge Bariso’s courtroom shortly before the pandemic and a screen shot of Judge Bariso in my zoom class [with some student chat questions on the side]). Our students are actively engaged in these experiences and challenge court actors (i.e. judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys) and their professors with a myriad of tough questions—addressing current issues.



Over the past couple of years, I worked together with Jennifer Musial from Women’s and Gender Studies, to collect and analyze data from our community engaged learning classes. We qualitatively analyzed over 80 student journals, conducted and analyzed student interviews, and administered/analyzed pre and post learning surveys to students. In September, one of our research articles was published and the second was accepted for publication in top tier education journals:

### **Criminal Justice Professor Contributes to International Handbook**

Dr. William Calathes, Professor, Criminal Justice, has contributed his work “The Revolutionary Consciousness of Abolition: Social Morality and Value-Based Praxis” to the The Routledge International Handbook of Penal Abolition, which is scheduled for release in December 2020.

### **Criminal Justice Professor Elected to the Executive Board of the American Society of Criminology**

Dr. Venessa Garcia, Criminal Justice, was elected to the Executive Board of the American Society of Criminology. The American Society of Criminology is the largest and most widely recognized international organization in the field with almost 3,000 members worldwide. A member since 1994, Dr. Garcia served on the conference organizing committee twice, including in 2019. Dr. Garcia begins her three-year term (2020-2023) as Executive Counselor in November ([asc41.com/Election/2020ElectionResults.html](http://asc41.com/Election/2020ElectionResults.html)).

<sup>1</sup> Esther Nir & Jennifer Musial (2020) The Power of Experiential Learning in Emotional Courtroom Spaces, *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, DOI: 10.1080/10511253.2020.1817515.

<sup>2</sup> Esther Nir & Jennifer Musial (2020). Engaging Politically Disenfranchised Students in Governance, forthcoming, *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (accepted September 2020).



## NJCU NURSING DEPARTMENT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

On October 16, 2020, the NJCU Nursing department held a Youth Mental Health First Aid Training on its Jersey City campus. The eight participants were either current nursing students or alumni who were interested in learning about this national program that teaches the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use.

