

Dear Readers,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of *The Annual Review of Criminal Justice Studies*. As the faculty advisor of this undergraduate journal, I am proud to present the exceptional work of our contributors and the critical perspectives they bring to the field of criminal justice studies.

As we embark on this journey of knowledge production, it is important to acknowledge the political implications of our work. The criminal justice system is not immune to the power dynamics of our society, and research in this field has historically been used to justify oppressive policies and practices. However, our contributors have risen to the challenge of critically analyzing this system and have provided thought-provoking insights on the complexities of crime and justice.

The articles in this issue cover a range of topics, including the impact of policing on communities of color, the intersection of mental health and incarceration, and the role of history in our contemporary moment. Each author has demonstrated a commitment to rigorous research and a willingness to engage with difficult questions.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our contributors for their hard work, dedication, and willingness to challenge the status quo. Their research reflects a commitment to social justice and the pursuit of a more equitable and fair criminal justice system.

I would also like to thank the many supporters and sponsors of this project. The faculty of the Department of Criminal Justice Studies laid the foundation and created the conditions for the establishment of this journal. Gina James, Carina Gallo, and Jeff Snipes nominated many student papers for inclusion in this issue. Department Chair Liz Brown encouraged and facilitated the development of this journal. Dean Alvin N. Alvarez's Spring 2023 Professional Development Grants Initiative provided financial support for the printing and binding of this issue. And the leadership of the Editorial Board (Claudia Lomeli-Rodriguez, Grace Ann Cowherd, and Serena Raquel Gomez) brought this issue into being.

As we move forward, we must continue to critically examine the policies and practices that have led to mass incarceration and various forms of structural violence of which the criminal justice system is a part. This work is essential to building a society that is truly just and equitable for all.

In closing, I would like to encourage all readers to engage with the articles in this issue with an open mind and a critical eye. I hope that this journal will serve as a platform for meaningful dialogue and inspire further research in the field of criminal justice studies.

Sincerely,

Albert de la Tierra, PhD (aka "Professor Lobo")  
Faculty Advisor, *The Annual Review of Criminal Justice Studies*