



**Criminal Justice Experience Survey
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This summer I worked under Dr. Charles Loeffler in conjunction with Dr. Jordan Hyatt on their project examining possible causes of wrongful convictions in Pennsylvania. The principal component of this project is the Criminal Justice Experience Survey (CJES), a self-report measure administered to varying samples of people who have been convicted of some crime. This project is an ongoing project which is continuing survey administration at different points in the criminal justice process. In addition to working with previously gathered data, I simultaneously researched my own question regarding the connection between wrongful convictions and the presence of case evidence.

The CJES asks inmates a variety of questions regarding their trial, lawyer, crime, case evidence, conviction, guilt/ innocence, and demographics. Much of the information from the initial surveys had already been entered; however, there were still some questions left for the summer team to code. In addition to post-conviction surveying, the team sought to identify further points in the criminal justice process where wrongful convictions might be identified. The summer team explored this question by first sitting in on preliminary trials and later surveying probationers. In order to gain a more thorough understanding of how courts operate throughout the state, I and the other PURM intern visited several Pennsylvania counties to compare their preliminary court proceedings. It was decided that while this was informative and slightly entertaining at times, at this point it was not a crucial contributor to the project. The survey administration portion of the summer took place in the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Department located in the Philadelphia Criminal Justice Center. Much like the CJES, this version of the survey collected

information on the nature of the probationer's offense as well as whether or not they feel as though they were wrongfully convicted.

Through this project, I primarily gained experience in data entry, memo writing, courtroom observing, and survey administration. The data entry part of the project allowed me to work more thoroughly with excel than I had in the past. Writing several memos throughout the summer prepared me for the final memo which was a combined literature review and data analysis for the connection between evidence and wrongful convictions. There was some suggestion that there are a higher number of wrongful convictions in cases involving one form of testimonial evidence which can often be misleading or falsified. The other form of evidence examined was forensic evidence which has similar issues; however, it is present in a smaller variety of offenses meaning it usually exists in more serious cases such as rape or murder. Overall I had a fantastic time exploring social science research, more specifically in the area of criminology. I hope to continue research in the future as a way to add to my experience studying criminology at Penn.