

To: Vice Provost Randy Smith

From: Ryan D. King, Divisional Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences
College of Arts and Sciences

RE: Transitioning Criminal Justice Research Center to a Collaborative

Background

The Criminal Justice Research Center (CJRC) was established at The Ohio State University in 1989 as a hub for interdisciplinary research on crime and justice issues. The CJRC was seeded during a time of rising crime rates and increasing imprisonment rates, with criminology increasingly represented in academic publications and grant proposals. In its formative years through the early 2000s, the CJRC was often supported by large grants, such as the Racial Democracy, Crime and Justice Network (RDCJN) from the National Science Foundation during Dr. Ruth Peterson's directorship.

The RDCJN moved to Rutgers in 2016 and is now at the University of Maryland. No significant external award has replaced it, and the CJRC has struggled to develop an identity. This is not the fault of any single director; rather, the number of faculty and students outside of sociology with research interests in criminology has declined. Much of the center's research portfolio is indistinguishable from the research program of the director and associate director.

Proposed Transition: From Center to Collaborative

The College of Arts and Sciences proposes that the CJRC be downgraded from a university center to a college-level collaborative, akin to the [Decision Sciences Collaborative](#). The collaborative can still be referred to as the CJRC, but it would have a narrower mission and a smaller budget (note: 100% of the current budget comes from ASC; we receive no support from OAA). It would focus on inviting speakers, awarding a few seed grants, and maintaining a community of interdisciplinary scholars. Should the collaborative secure external funding via a grant or philanthropy, then we can reassess whether a return to center status with an new mission is warranted. The collaborative would no longer report to the Divisional Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences; the director of the collaborative would report to the chair of sociology.

Structural Changes and Timing

The College of Arts and Sciences' budget will be reduced by approximately \$7 million per year under the new budget model, and some cuts to programs or centers are unavoidable. FY27 is a suitable time to make this change for two reasons. First, this is the final year of the director's appointment, and he would have full information before deciding whether to continue as director of the collaborative in FY28. Second, the lone staff member at the CJRC is retiring, which is a fitting time to reduce staff by not filling the vacancy.