It is an honor to have been elected to the presidency of the White Collar Crime Research Consortium for the 2011-2012 term. At this volatile time in the nation’s economic, political and legal history, the work done by the National White Collar Crime Center and Consortium members is, if anything, more important than ever.

Some combination of crime and irresponsibility in high corporate places—and woefully inadequate oversight of them by government regulators—were central to the worldwide economic collapse of 2007-2008, and we can expect that the deep recession and its lingering effects will fuel many forms of white collar crime, from internet and credit card fraud to insider trading, more ‘creative’ corporate accounting, and the defrauding of such government programs as Medicare and military contracting.

In the meanwhile, the adequacy of federal and state regulation of many of these forms of crime remains in doubt. While the 111th Congress wrote new regulatory legislation for the financial sector, and the Administration has issued new environmental regulations, the 112th Congress just underway is markedly less supportive of such controls. And in the current fiscal climate, always strained enforcement resources are likely to be early targets for reductions for both budgetary and ideological reasons. Such regulatory uncertainty plays into the rates of white collar crime as well, and in a number of ways.

That’s why our ongoing work—individually and collectively—is so important. While white collar crime rarely commands sustained public or policy emphasis, indeed because of this fact, the Center’s efforts to improve enforcement and researchers’ efforts to understand the dimensions and determinants of these costly forms of victimization are vital to the long-term protection of the public interest.

To enhance our role in this work, I would like to see whether we might increase the synergy of the Consortium’s members’ efforts. At the recent American Society of Criminology meetings in San Francisco, I mentioned one possibility: an effort to work with the Congress and relevant government agencies to create a national white-collar crime database for both policy and research purposes. Of course, nothing of the sort exists at present, and never has. But I have heard on good account that the Obama Administration has been working on something of the kind with an eye toward awarding government contracts to businesses that have good records of compliance with federal laws and regulations. Interest in implementing legislation toward such a database has also been expressed enthusiastically...
Remarks (cont.)

by at least one member of Congress, and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich published an article last fall calling for such an accounting system. After the Consortium luncheon in San Francisco, several members met to strategize ways and means of working toward this goal, and further conversations, analytic products and networking are in the making. Should any other members wish to be involved, please let me know (pcyeager@bu.edu).

Other possibilities for building synergies include the creation of a web site for the exchange of information, mentoring, data, and critiques. Again, if this sounds like an interesting idea, please let me know about your interest and any ideas you have for implementation. Any other ideas for helping each other with our various aims in this field, and assisting the Center with its important work, are also most welcome.

In the meanwhile, best wishes for your own work and the New Year ahead.

Member News
New Books

Jay Albanese is author of the new book Transnational Crime and the 21st Century: Criminal Enterprise, Corruption, and Opportunity (Oxford University Press, 2011). The book describes and analyzes the nature of transnational crime today, relying on case studies, interviews, and research, using major cases, documented successes, as well as failures, and the reasons why we should be hopeful or disconsolate about the prospects for the future. Transnational crime is examined in its nine most serious forms: trafficking in drugs, stolen property, counterfeiting, human trafficking, fraud and cybercrime, commercialized sex, extortion and racketeering, money laundering, and corruption. A systematic approach to risk assessment is proposed to more successfully attack those factors that cause criminals to enter illicit markets and become successful. The reader is given a perspective to understand the big picture of transnational crime, those who engage in it, and the methods needed to reduce its incidence.

Dr. Jason Ulsperger, of Arkansas Tech University, recently had a book on deviant and criminal behavior in nursing homes released. The book, co-authored with J. David Knottnerus, details the organizational dynamics of long-term care that facilitate maltreatment against residents. The book is titled Elder Care Catastrophe: Rituals of Abuse in Nursing Homes (2011). It is currently available through Paradigm Publishers.
The Focus

New Members

Karen Clark, Western Oregon University, Criminal Justice Department (clark@wou.edu)

Eric Connolly, Florida State University, Criminology (ejc10c@fsu.edu)

David Murphy, Lynchburg College, Accounting/Economic Crime Prevention (Murphy.d@Lynchburg.edu)

Angela Wartel, Lewis Clark State College, Social Science Division (arwartel@lcsc.edu)

Justin Heinonen, Michigan State University, Department of Criminal Justice (heinone4@msu)

*If you know of anyone interested in joining the WCCRC, please direct them to our website where they can access the membership forms (http://www.nw3c.org/research/white-collar-crime-consortium.cfm).

Research Initiatives

Brody Lectures in Saudi Arabia

Richard Brody of University of New Mexico gave a series of presentations in Saudi Arabia in 2010. Two of the presentations were at a University, and two were at Saudi Aramco; three of these were fraud-related:


(If you are interested in learning more about these presentations, you can contact Brody at brody.mgt.unm.edu.)

Copes and Kerley Do Research on Fraud Involving Google Brand

Dr. Heith Copes and Dr. Kent R. Kerley of the Department of Justice Sciences, University of Alabama at Birmingham, have received a Google Research Award to study Internet fraud. Focusing specifically on Work-at-Home scams and other fraudulent activities using the Google brand name, the study will develop a statistical profile of consumers victimized by fraud and determine what characteristics of the fraud made victims fall prey. This information can be used to educate the public, reduce future victimization, and reduce potential damage to Google’s corporate and public reputation.

Goals of the study, entitled Understanding Work-at-Home Scams and Other Fraudulent Activities Using the Google Brand: An Analysis of Victim Complaints to the Internet Crime Complaint Center, include the following: 1) identify cases from the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) database that involved the use of Google’s brand and various services provided by Google (e.g., YouTube, Gmail, Blogger) to determine the breadth of crimes that emerge from these frauds; 2) analyze the IC3 database
Copes and Kerley (cont.)

to determine how Google’s name was used, the nature of the fraud perpetrated, the economic impact of the fraud, the extent to which victims blamed Google for their victimization, and other important crime-specific variables; 3) conduct a follow-up telephone survey with victims to obtain additional background and crime-specific information; and 4) use the results to develop ways to identify these types of crimes more quickly, which could then lead to public service announcements and other educational activities produced by Google to warn consumers about misuse of its brand and resources.

If you have any comments or questions about this research, you can contact Copes at jhcopes@uab.edu and Kerley at krkerley@uab.edu.

Articles


Calendar

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
48th Annual Meeting
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Sheraton Centre Toronto
March 1-5, 2011
http://www.asc41.com/annualmeeting.htm

American Society of Criminology
Annual Meeting
Washington, D.C.
Washington Hilton Hotel
November 16-19, 2011
http://www.asc41.com/

ASC Luncheon Highlights

On November 18th, at the American Society of Criminology 2010 annual meeting in San Francisco, the WCCRC held a luncheon at which members were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the field of white collar crime research. Pictured below are the members who received awards at the luncheon, followed by a group picture of luncheon attendees. Kip Schlegel performs the solemn presidential duty of handing out the awards.

Dawn Rothe receives the Young Scholar Award.
Congratulations!
Stephen Tillotson receives the Outstanding Student Paper Award. Congratulations!

Neal Shover receives the Gilbert Geis Lifetime Achievement Award. Congratulations!
Kip Schlegel receives recognition for serving as the WCCRC’s President. Thank you, Kip!
(NW3C’s own John Kane also pictured.)

WCCRC luncheon attendees.
NW3C Research Section

The NW3C Research team is in the process of completing the Internet Crime Complaint Center’s eleventh annual report. The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is NW3C’s partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation devoted to fielding complaints on Internet-facilitated crime and referring these complaints to appropriate law enforcement agencies. The annual report presents statistics on complaints received and referred by IC3, while highlighting emergent crime trends. The report will soon be available at http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreports.aspx.

In December, NW3C published its 2010 National Public Survey on White Collar Crime. The survey focused on victimization, reporting behavior, and perceptions of crime seriousness among the American public. Among the survey’s findings is that nearly 1 in 4 households experienced at least one form of white collar crime victimization in the previous 12 months. To access the report, go to http://crimesurvey.nw3c.org/survey.cfm.

NW3C is gearing up for the upcoming WCCRC luncheon to be held in conjunction with the 2011 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Toronto. Reservations have been made! Be on the lookout for emails regarding the time and place—and, most importantly, the food!

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Editor’s Note

The Focus is a publication of the White Collar Crime Research Consortium (WCCRC). It welcomes articles and announcements concerning white collar crime research or related scholarly work. NW3C sponsors, funds, and coordinates the activities of the WCCRC. Please direct comments, suggestions, and materials concerning the newsletter to Rodney Huff (rhuff@nw3c.org).