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## AP-LS Student Committee February, 2022

### Career Corner

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*The Career Corner is intended to highlight the individuals who work at the intersection of law and psychology, where they come from, how they got there, and how their experiences influence their research, teaching, and/or practice. This edition of Career Corner profiles Emily J. Salisbury, Ph.D., the director of the Utah Criminal Justice Center. In this role, Dr. Salisbury oversees the implementation of the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) in over 50 domestic and international jurisdictions. Dr. Salisbury is also an associate professor in the College of Social Work at the University of Utah. Additionally, Dr. Salisbury has taken on several roles, such as commissioner for the Nevada Sentencing Commission, that demonstrate her passion for public criminology.*

*Rebekah R. Adair, 4<sup>th</sup> year Ph.D. student at the University of Texas at El Paso and the 2021-2022 Student Committee Campus Representative Coordinator, interviewed Dr. Salisbury.*

**APLS Student Committee:** Can you briefly describe your career trajectory, starting with your time as an undergraduate?

**Dr. Salisbury:** My undergraduate degree is in psychology from William Jewell College, a tiny little school outside of Kansas City in Missouri. I started off as a biology major but switched over to psychology and loved it. I didn't get involved in too much research at an undergraduate level – I didn't start that until I was in my master's program. So, I had a degree in psychology, and I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do, but I knew I liked school. The area of forensic psychology was interesting and intriguing to me, so I started to look up programs with a specific research focus in forensic psychology and not necessarily those with a clinical focus. There were very few programs back then, and I ended up attending Castleton State College – which is now called Castleton University – in Vermont. It was this great little research program in forensic psychology with Curt Bartol, Anne Bartol, and Brenda Russell – a whole list of people in this tiny program where the Criminal Justice and Behavior journal was housed for many years. These were some of the reasons that I was drawn to this program since I wasn't interested in going the clinical route – I wanted to do more of a research track. I started that program and had an incredible opportunity to serve as managing editor of Criminal Justice and Behavior during my time as a master's student, which helped me learn the field in a way that you can't get from a classroom. I was able to communicate with reviewers, authors, and the editorial board – which helped to improve my writing. It was an incredible role to have early on. I took a class in correctional psychology from Curt Bartol and absolutely loved it. The class prompted me to think about the intersection of criminology and criminal justice. Initially, I wanted to go into jury consulting, but sometimes you take a class, and it speaks to you. I think students should really think about how when you get excited about something, that means something. From there, I thought I was done with school, but a very dear friend of mine convinced me to attend the University of Cincinnati to get a Ph.D. in criminology and criminal justice.

**APLS Student Committee:** Can you tell us a bit about the research you are working on right now?

**Dr. Salisbury:** Yes – as the director of the Utah Criminal Justice Center, we have several different projects we are working on. One specific project that is wrapping up is a randomized control trial (RCT) of gender-responsive probation in Oregon. Essentially, it is an RCT with both groups getting some form of gender-responsive probation, but the treatment group received access to “community health specialists” in addition to working with gender-responsive probation officers. Community health specialists help justice-involved women target specific responsibility factors that probation officers might not have the time or resources to handle. The community health specialists are an extra layer of support, focusing on areas like transportation and emotional support for everyday issues that justice-involved women may deal with. Emotional support can address areas of concern such as food insecurity, navigating parent-teacher interactions with children at school, and helping to champion success when it comes to needing motivation to attend treatment. We are seeing positive outcomes in qualitative focus groups and interviews with both staff and clients. The overwhelming message from staff and clients demonstrates positive feedback on the gender-responsive supervision and endorsement of the community health specialists.

**APLS Student Committee:** How did you get into the feminist pathways work?

**Dr. Salisbury:** Mentorship. I must thank my “academic mother,” Dr. Pat Van Voorhis, for shining a light on something I didn’t realize how much I cared about. I was going into my second year of my doctoral program and needed to connect with a mentor. I ended up working on a project that was developing the Women’s Risk/Needs Assessment with the National Institute of Corrections. I realized this was an area in need of more research. The more I read, the more I began to understand how women walk through this world in a very different way in comparison to men. I initially had to do some training in women’s studies and understand how we have a different approach to the lives we experience. That all happened because of mentorship, because Dr. Van Voorhis gave me this ability to think very deeply about these issues and read widely outside of criminology about these issues. I realized that, even during that time, there was quite a bit of research that focused on and understood that women required a different approach; however, it wasn’t as closely examined through the intersection of psychology and law and criminology at that point, other than the feminist criminologists, who I learned a great deal from. Overall, it was mentorship and starting a project that allowed me to go deep into the work and understand how women’s needs and strengths are very different in comparison to men’s.

**APLS Student Committee:** What is most rewarding about your line of research and what do you find the most challenging about this work?

**Dr. Salisbury:** Being a college professor and getting to do the research that I get excited about is one of the greatest things ever. I feel very fortunate to love what I do. Grading is not always the most fun, but the fact that we get to do this and have direct reinforcement with students who are excited about doing the work is rewarding. I firmly believe that getting the expertise of our work at the Utah Criminal Justice Center out to stakeholders can create direct impact. While I don’t always work directly with justice-involved women, there are times where I get to sit down with them, and I always find it rewarding to hear their stories and to essentially just listen. I believe my professional identity is about amplifying the voices of people who haven’t found their voices yet, and when they do, to sit down and listen. We need more people with lived experience at the table making policy decisions. One of the most challenging aspects of this work is navigating relationships with people who don’t understand the incredible amount of change that can happen within people in this area.

**APLS Student Committee:** Have you faced any major obstacles in your career? If so, what were they and how did you overcome them?

**Dr. Salisbury:** I have been very fortunate in my career, but there was a time when I was still a junior faculty member when I sought out guidance from a man in a leadership position in my academic unit on some professional decisions I was offered. He advised me to not take on these opportunities because they thought they knew what was best for me and my career. It turns out the advice wasn’t about me or ways to help me, but rather

the advice was more about them. I was able to overcome that because I realized what was going on in that situation, and I ended up taking the opportunity and I'm very grateful I did. Overall, I've been fortunate to be able to make decisions for myself that have made my career successful – being in the right place at the right time and getting to work with my mentor and have the training that I had at Cincinnati.

**APLS Student Committee:** How do you create work-life balance?

**Dr. Salisbury:** I'm always trying to seek work-life balance, even in this world of "Zoom-land". It has become easier in some ways and even more difficult in some ways. Work-life balance for me is not only about spending time with my partner, my dog, friends, and family, but just the day-to-day practices of eating well. Food is medicine, and work-life balance for me is about taking care of nutrition because it effects my body every day. Also, getting in exercise when I can by going out and hiking. I tend to get cranky when I haven't been out in nature in a while. I try to model for my staff that there are times for really hard work and really hard play.

**APLS Student Committee:** What advice do you have for students who are seeking a career in academia or research?

**Dr. Salisbury:** My advice is that there are multiple paths to success. I advise my doctoral students that they get to decide what they want to do with their career. There is pressure to go into academia, which we need; it's important that we have students that feed into academic programs. But I also value scholars who go into public policy, government agencies, and research think-tanks to have a different kind of impact. Publications are critical to what we do in academia, but we need more people who understand the importance of community engagement and impact on the ground. I also encourage my own students to work with as many faculty as they can handle because I think it makes them a stronger scholar to take on multiple perspectives.