Dr. Kirk Johnson received his Ph.D. and M.A. from Washington State University and his B.A. from University of Washington. He was chair of Central Washington University’s Department of Sociology from Fall 1997 through Spring 2007. He began part-time service as Associate Dean in Summer 2006. As of Fall 2007, Dr. Johnson has devoted himself entirely to administration in the position of dean. Dr. Johnson’s research has focused on the testing and extension of social control theory, the social construction of deviance among adolescents, criminal victimization, and the social construction of law and criminal sanctions.

Dr. Dave Darda received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley and his B.S. from the University of Illinois. He has been a professor of Biological Sciences at CWU for the past 26 years. His primary areas of biological interest are vertebrate morphology, evolution, and herpetology. He has conducted fieldwork in California, Mexico, and the Pacific Northwest, and is a coauthor of the book, “Reptiles of Washington and Oregon”. In 2002, Dr. Darda was honored as the CWU Distinguished University Professor of Teaching, and he has twice served as Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences.

Kari Anderson received her BA in Communication from Pacific Lutheran University. While at PLU, she focused on public relations, sports administration, coaching and sports psychology. A chance work study appointment in PLU’s development department has turned into a career devoted to non-profit fundraising. Kari has spent her career in the development sector, leading staff, board members and volunteers, and loves to connect people with their passions, specifically connecting dollars to causes people hold dear.
Department Spotlight continued:

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

In addition, with additional staff support, we would like to reinitiate the sustainability efforts that CWU’s former president, Dr. McIntyre, had spearheaded. We see ample opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to become engaged in CWU’s own efforts toward becoming a greener university, and in this process, increasing community awareness and education of the environmental issues that face our society. Optimally, we would like the same level of support that a department has, e.g., half-time secretary, support technician, student meeting room, and physical space. Perhaps in the future it may be appropriate to become a department with joint faculty appointments. Finally, we plan to increase general education and online offerings.

If you were stopped in the airport by someone you didn’t know and asked about CWU and your program, what would you share?
The ENST program at CWU strikes a balance between research on local and global environmental issues and small class sizes where students can really interact with the faculty. Our program is unique in that it draws on a variety of social and natural science fields to establish a foundation of knowledge that is common to all our majors, while also allowing students to specialize in upper-division classes in biology, chemistry, geography, geology, or policy. Students who graduate from our program have an understanding of the interaction between natural and social sciences combined with practical work experience gained from the research, internship, or study abroad component.

Faculty Interview—
Cody Stoddard, Law and Justice, Assistant Professor and Associate Graduate Faculty

Where were you born and raised, and how did you arrive at CWU?
I’m originally from Boise, Idaho and lived there until I graduated from Boise State University in 2005. Much of my family and many of my friends still live there and I spend a fair amount of time visiting and doing research there during the year. When I graduated from Boise State, I went to the University of Cincinnati in Ohio where I completed my PhD in Criminal Justice.

How long have you worked in your role at CWU? What other positions have you held here, or at other institutions?
I’ve been at Central Washington for four years. This is my first tenure track position, however. I’ve been a lecturer for Boise State University, and an adjunct faculty member at the College of Mt. St. Joseph [Ohio] and at the University of Cincinnati.

What do you most enjoy about teaching?
Personally, I would say the challenge of teaching is one of the things I enjoy the most. Most individuals have formulated some kind of position regarding issues in law, criminal justice, and criminology. As a professor in this area, I see my job as showing students the debate from as many perspectives as possible. This often means confronting them with arguments about crime and law that directly oppose their personal positions. I often find myself in a devil’s advocate role—and this presents an enjoyable challenge!

If you are involved in research, what is the most rewarding and/or challenged aspect of your research?
The area of law, criminal justice, and criminology is a fun and odd area of study. In many respects, the law has a weird relationship with the social sciences. Sometimes, it is like the two disciplines talk in a slightly different language and it makes the area of study fascinating. These differences are often compounded by how people can approach legal and social science questions from different directions. In short, these factors create challenges that are simply fascinating to address and study.

The other major reward is that much of the criminal justice research is applied. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work closely with individuals who are in

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An Interview

with Naming Contest Winner
Claudia McGehee
(nee McHargue)

Where were you born and raised?
I was born in Moses Lake, Washington (on Larson Air Force Base, while it was still active) and raised in Vancouver, Washington.

Why did you choose to attend CWU?
I visited a friend's sister at CWU my sophomore year in high school. She lived in Quigley Hall, one of the cozy brick Bassetti dorms (where I would later live, too). As we toured around that weekend, I fell in love with Central. CWU was the right size, in a part of the state that I loved, had a good surrounding community feel, and offered great courses of study I was interested in. It felt like home from the beginning.

Tell us about your CWU experience.
Although undergraduate school was only four years of my life, they were formative, memorable ones. My time at Central is still vivid to me. I was scholarly and kind of geeky, and loved going to classes. The professors I had I still quote. Eating at the dining halls with 100 of my closest friends, studying and hanging out around campus on the weekends, enjoying the area recreationally (Yakima river rafting, Snoqualmie Pass skiing, Vantage hiking and boating, and close-by Big City Seattle visits) were all parts of my CWU experience. It's hard to imagine that there were no cell phones back then, but there was something about spontaneous happenings, parties that just erupted out of thin air, that was pretty special. There was a different sense of connection on campus, pre-internet!

I took a semester off and studied abroad my junior year. I stayed with family in England (my mom was born and raised in the UK and I have a great affinity for that country). I took an independent study course in natural history at Oxford University. This travel rounded out my college experience nicely.

CWU definitely provided the foundation both professional and social that my life still builds on.

What was your major?
I have a BS in anthropology (emphasis in archaeology), and a minor in art history.

Where has your career path taken you?
I worked on several archaeological digs during college and after, in the field as well as in the lab. After moving to Seattle, I searched for entry-level museum work, with little luck. I found a position as an assistant in an art restoration studio. I found I missed making art (another passion in life), so decided to go to art school. I went to a community college (Seattle Central) and earned an AA in graphic design. After I married Daniel V. McGehee (CWU '85), we moved to Moscow, Idaho and I promptly found a position in museum work! As director of the Appaloosa Horse Club Museum, I melded all my degrees together and was able to create exhibits and produce promotional materials, while also managing the museum and curating the collection.

We moved to Iowa City, Iowa in 1993 when my husband took a position at the University of Iowa. I wanted to try full-time work in graphics, and I’ve run my freelance illustration business ever since. Freelancing allows me to work from my home studio and keep flexible hours while raising our daughter (Lucy, now 15). My illustration work can be found nationally in magazines, advertising, and packaging. I also sell my art in forms of prints and greeting cards. I am a published author/illustrator of five children’s picture books, working on my sixth this year. A recent job blended my museum background again as my work was chosen as a focal exhibit of a new natural history interpretive center in Manhattan, Kansas. It was an honor to see my illustrated coyote, rabbits and other prairie animals enlarged to be eight feet tall!

A large part of my general mission is to create art and writings that inspire and connect children of all ages with their natural world.

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Tell us something personal about yourself—family, hobbies—something most folks would not know about you?
Most people who know me now are surprised to find out I was originally an archaeology major, but I say I’ve always liked to dig and still do. I dig gardens and work an acre of yard here in Iowa. I dig while I research, online, and through library stacks. Even my illustration medium of choice, scratchboard, requires “digging” with an X-Acto blade to create wood-cut like images. My educational roots at CWU all started this digging!

Why did you choose to respond to the College of the Sciences Naming Contest?
I was happy to read about the creation of this newsletter, as I’m always curious to learn about other CWU graduates. Being a writer, I love spontaneous word challenges. I started thinking about how all the colleges form a fabric of learning, each contributing a part, or a strand of the entire piece. The word strand popped out. Strands occur in DNA. The word also made me think of my own discipline in archaeology, where strands of ancient textiles might be part of interpretation. It felt like a good fit.

Claudia McGehee—Naming Contest Winner

Other
I’m fortunate enough, even though I live out of state, to get back to Ellensburg quite regularly. My in-laws, Professor Charles McGehee (Sociology, CWU Emeritus) and Gisela (who worked at the CWU Student Health clinic for more than 30 years) retired here so we visit often. I love walking our daughter through campus (future Wildcat?!?) and remember the sense of belonging and contentment. It’s a great place to grow.

the field and I’ve been able to watch some of my work inform policy changes within agencies. To be, being able to make contributions to how work is done in the field is a major reward.

**What did you think you were going to do “when you grew up”?**

For the longest time, I figured I would end up in the natural sciences. For most of my youth, I was extremely interested in chemistry, physics, and geology. However, early in high school I started spending a lot of time focusing on law and legal issues. When I started my undergraduate degree at Boise State, the original goal was to try and unite my passion for law and science by tracking myself for a career in patent law (with the intent of focusing on engineering and eventually law school). However, the social sciences really pulled me in and I’ve been primarily focusing on the intersection of law and social science ever since.

**When you’re not on campus, what are some favorite things you do to relax and unwind?**

I spend a large amount of my time away from the university with my wife and our four animals (two dogs and two cats). We often spend a lot of time traveling to Boise to visit with family and friends. My wife and I are also big time nerds. We are both avid video gamers and get fairly competitive about it.

**If you were to describe CWU in a sentence to a prospective student, what would you say?**

The major selling point I would give is that Central Washington University offers unique access to work with faculty members. One of the major things I have been amazed by here at Central is how accessible faculty members are to students and how much the university emphasizes academic collaboration with students. I credit much of my personal success and trajectory to strong faculty support when I was an undergraduate. I think Central creates an environment that fosters a faculty student collaboration that is invaluable.

**What is something that most folks at CWU don’t know about you?**

Unfortunately, I’m not all that interesting of a person. I’m honestly not quite sure.

**What inspires you about CWU?**

The major factor that drives me is making some positive impact in the administration of justice. Sometimes the differences are small, however, research in the field of criminal justice and criminology has a major potential to improve the lives of citizens. My motivation is to contribute to this constant evolution in some productive way.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

In the next 10 years, I really hope to see myself working on a long term data collection project. One of the major limitations in criminal justice and criminology is the lack of data sets that examine changes over time. It is just a practical limitation that we see. My hope is to be able to contribute to the field by collecting data that can better answer questions about change in our system.