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SMU DEDMAN LAW DEASON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM CENTER LAUNCHES PROSECUTORIAL CHARGING PRACTICES RESEARCH PROJECT

Nation's leading criminal justice researchers partner for the Center's first data-driven research initiative

DALLAS (SMU) –The [Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center](#) at [SMU Dedman School of Law](#) is partnering with some of the nation's leading criminal justice researchers to conduct the Prosecutorial Charging Practices Project, the Center's first data-driven criminal justice research project.

This project is an innovative, mixed-methods, empirical study that is multi-jurisdictional. The Prosecutorial Charging Practices Project will provide a holistic account of prosecutors' charging practices. Additionally, it will:

- produce descriptive and empirical information about the important factors that influence prosecutorial decision-making;
- evaluate how prosecutorial charging decisions affect cases as they progress through the criminal justice system; and
- provide a baseline against which to evaluate future prosecutorial practices.

“This research will represent the varied prosecutorial work of three district and/or county attorneys' offices in discrete geographical locations, with different charging philosophies, said Pamela Metzger, director of the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center and professor at SMU Dedman School of Law. “We expect the results to be instructive in determining the relative effects of prosecutorial charging policies on case outcomes.”

“This is precisely why we were so pleased to welcome the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center to the Dedman School of Law,” said Dedman School of Law Dean Jennifer Collins. “This research is desperately needed in the field. It will shed a light on prosecutor practices, inform policymakers, and help to identify best practices. We are delighted that the Deason Center has launched such an innovative project with such a talented research team.”

The research will take about 18 months and involve students from SMU Dedman School of Law students as part of the research team. In addition to [Metzger](#), the project will be led by a team of nationally recognized researchers, including:

- [Jon Gould](#), Professor of Public Affairs and Law, American University
- [Elaine Nugent-Borakove](#), President, Justice Management Institute
- [Belén V. Lowrey-Kinberg](#), Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, Saint Francis College

After publication of its report on the Prosecutorial Charging Practices Project, the Deason Center will make the underlying anonymized data available so that other criminal justice scholars can continue to advance knowledge about this important topic. The Deason Center hopes to conduct subsequent studies that evaluate how prosecutors' charging practices affect other actors in the criminal justice system, such as criminal court judges and criminal defense attorneys.

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The Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center at SMU Dedman School of Law promotes criminal justice reform by conducting, supporting, and disseminating data-driven criminal justice research. The Deason Center publishes and promotes criminal justice reform scholarship in academic journals and public policy fora. The Center prioritizes research designs and scholarly projects with utility across multiple jurisdictions. The Center also supports and encourages the criminal justice scholarship of SMU Law faculty.

The School of Law at SMU was founded in 1925. It was named Dedman School of Law in 2001 in honor of Dallas benefactors Nancy and Robert H. Dedman, Sr., and their family. SMU Dedman Law enjoys a national and international reputation of distinction. It is among the most competitive law schools in the country for admission, as well as one of the most successful in the placement of its graduates.

SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, communities and the world.