

Division History

Division on Terrorism & Bias Crimes – The American Society of Criminology

Last Update: February 5, 2019

Gary LaFree first started thinking about a terrorism and bias crimes division for the ASC during the ASC meetings of 2013 in Atlanta. LaFree talked about it with colleagues at both START and in the Criminology Department at Maryland as well with colleagues and friends including Freilich. After kicking around the idea informally, LaFree contacted Chris Eskridge on April 29, 2014:

Hi Chris,

How are things going? Is there any way (I know it is late!) that we could get access to a room in San Francisco to bring together a group of people interested in establishing an ASC section on terrorism? I have been chatting the idea up with various people and have gotten some very positive responses. Hope all is well! Cheers, Gary

Chris wrote back:

Gary,

Just to you...as you see, I sent your note on to Susan Case and she will get you a room. May I suggest that you visit with Cynthia Lum at George Mason. She has spearheaded the creation of two divisions, and can help with things on that score.

I am really happy to hear of this development. As you progress, we will obviously need to speak further! Yours will be the 10th division.

Take care, Chris

ASC indeed found us space and we had an organizational meeting in San Francisco in 2014. Before the meeting, LaFree took Chris's advice and had a long discussion with Cynthia Lum. Cynthia was great. Lum provided the by-laws and constitution for the Policing Division—which we used as templates. To meet the requirements of the ASC by-laws, we developed petition sheets and sent them to individuals that we thought would likely be interested. Each petition included room for up to 25 supporters. Some of the people who helped us collect names at this stage were Laura Dugan, Joshua Freilich, Cynthia Lum, Sue-Ming Yang, Nancy Morris, Bo Jiang, James Forest, John Sawyer and Simon Perry. But there were others as well.

We all started contacting as many people as we could that we thought might be interested in establishing a terrorism and bias crime division. LaFree of course relied on START for this and got word out to the 10,000 or so subscribers to our electronic newsletter. We also created a listing of ASC scholars interested in terrorism and bias crimes broadly defined. LaFree sent out a mass email on August 18, 2014:

Hi Colleagues!

You are receiving this message either because you have done some past research on terrorism or bias crime—or we at least thought you had done some work in this area! Most of you will agree that over the last decade or so there has been a tremendous increase in the number of criminologists doing research on terrorism and bias crime. If you are not convinced, take a quick look at how many sessions are scheduled for the upcoming meetings in San Francisco! Against this back drop a few of us thought that it might be useful to propose an ASC Division on Terrorism and Bias Crime. As with the other ASC Divisions, this could serve as a focus for new directions in research and education.

To this end we would like to invite you to attend an exploratory meeting on establishing a Division on Terrorism/Bias Crime at the upcoming annual meetings in San Francisco. Here is the time and location:

Organizational Meeting on Terrorism and Bias Crime
3:30 - 4:30 pm
Thursday, November 20
Marriott, Laurel Room on the B2 Level

In order to establish a new Division, we need a Constitution and signatures from 100 current members of the ASC—and apparently, the signatures have to be from non-students. To get the ball rolling, we are attaching a draft constitution and a petition. If everyone receiving this note could set a goal of getting just five signatures, we would be way over the numbers needed.

So, hope to see you all in San Francisco! Let us know if you have any suggestions, revisions, or additions for the draft constitution. And please bring signatures with you!

I hope everyone is enjoying the last few weeks of summer.

Best wishes,

*Gary LaFree
Josh Freilich
Bo Jiang*

As the meeting in San Francisco approached, none of us knew exactly how many people would show up. When we arrived at the meeting we were pleasantly surprised to find that it was standing room only! We do not have an exact count but would estimate as many as 150 people showed up. By then we had plenty of signatures to justify taking our petition for a new division to the ASC board.

At this meeting we also established an interim committee to move forward on creating the division. LaFree then updated Chris Eskridge on December 13, 2014:

Chris, as you know, we actively explored at the ASC meetings in San Francisco the possibility of organizing a new ASC Division on Terrorism and Bias Crime. The response to our organizational meeting was very positive. We ended up with 150 signatures—far more than required by the ASC Constitution to create a new Division. I am forwarding copies of the petitions. We checked the names against the ASC website and are confident that we have far more than are required. We also have produced a Constitution and Mission Statement, attached here as well.

To move the process forward, we have constituted an Interim Committee to establish the Division:

<i>Laura Dugan</i>	<i>ldugan@umd.edu</i>
<i>James Forrest</i>	<i>james_forest@uml.edu</i>
<i>Joshua Freilich</i>	<i>jfreilich@jjay.cuny.edu</i>
<i>Gary LaFree</i>	<i>garylafree@gmail.com</i>
<i>Carla Isabel Lewandowski</i>	<i>lewandowskic@rowan.edu</i>
<i>Cynthia Lum</i>	<i>clum@gmu.edu</i>

This group will serve until we receive ASC Board approval to hold elections. So we would very much appreciate it if you can get this matter to the ASC Board at its next meeting.

We are hoping to have the Division be operational in time for the annual ASC meetings next year in Washington, DC.

Please let us know if we need to do anything else to move this process forward.

Thanks and Happy Holidays!

Gary LaFree

Note: William Parkin soon joined the interim committee and agreed to serve as the web-manager for the proposed division's website.

The next ASC meetings were scheduled for Washington, DC. The ASC board was meeting in DC May 1-2, 2015. When LaFree wrote to Chris asking him how it looked for our proposal, he wrote back in February 2015:

Greetings Gary. The ASC Board Meeting will be held in D.C., May 1 - 2 at the Washington Hilton. There is no reason your division would not be approved. The next step is to develop a constitution and a set of by-laws. Get those to me by mid-October if you would. We will run them by the Board at the Tuesday Board Meeting in November. Get with Susan Case to set up a time and room for your first meeting in D.C. next November, and you are off and running!

You are certainly invited to come to the Board Meeting in May if you would like to make a person pitch for the new division, but I truly don't think it would be necessary. You have the signatures and its rather perfunctory.....

Chris

Chris then followed up with other advice:

....doing the classic sitting here and thinking a bit....there is really no reason that you and your team could not move ahead and get your terrorism division constitution and by-laws in place by mid-April, in time for the Board Meeting on May 1-2. Given that you have Cynthia to get you a template, and if you and your team have the time, yea, get me those documents by April 15, and the Board will vote on May 1-2, and this will be a done deal.

Chris

And LaFree responded on February 10, 2015:

Hi Chris,

We actually already developed and discussed a division constitution and set of by laws. I am attaching them. Thanks, Gary

And Chris replied:

Gary,

Ah, fantastic. You are way ahead of me! I will include these in the materials for the Board. This is great.

Chris

LaFree then updated the small Interim Committee that was working to get the Division off the ground. The interim committee began planning ahead for the next annual ASC meeting in Washington DC. Of course the ASC Board did approve us at its Washington Board meeting and LaFree sent an email update to the DTBC's in progress listserv on May 19, 2015:

A Message from the Division on Terrorism and Bias Crimes Interim Working Group:

Dear Current and Previous ASC Members,

ASC has a new division - the Division on Terrorism and Bias Crimes! Its mission will be to advance theory, knowledge and practice in the study of terrorism and bias crimes through rigorous research and evaluation.

*The Division is also now accepting membership dues (\$15 active member; \$10 student member). **We are also asking those interested to consider making a one-time \$100 donation to help get the Division started!***

If your ASC dues are already paid for 2015 and you would like to add the new division to your current dues please complete a division only form at http://www.asc41.com/Forms/2015_Division_Only_Form.pdf and send it to the ASC office.

**If you have not renewed your dues for 2015, you can do so and join the Division on Terrorism and Bias Crimes at <https://www.asc41.com/appform1.html>.*

To celebrate the start of the Division, a special event and reception will take place at the ASC annual meeting in Washington DC. Please check the preliminary program for details. Everyone is welcome! To keep informed about upcoming events and membership, check in with us at <https://www.asc41.com/divisions.htm>.

Sincerely,

The Division on Terrorism and Bias Crimes Interim Working Group

Laura Dugan

James Forest

Joshua Freilich

Bo Jiang

Gary LaFree

Carla Isabel Lewandowski

Cynthia Lum

William Parkin

We then had a structure to hold elections and we were off to the races! The DTBC's elections resulted in its first Executive Board:

Gary LaFree, Chair

Joshua Freilich, Vice Chair

Sue-Ming Yang, Treasurer/secretary

Laura Dugan, Executive Counselor

Brian Forst, Executive Counselor

Jeff Gruenewald, Executive Counselor

William Parkin continued to serve as Web-manager. The DTBC also immediately established a committee that included Jennifer Carson and Nancy Morris (who were subsequently joined by Carla Lewandowski) that focused on membership recruitment and publicizing the Division's activities.

The first official DTBC ASC meeting occurred in Washington DC in 2015. Once again the meeting was standing room only! We do not have an exact count but would estimate that over 120 people showed up. At this inaugural DTBC meeting leading Sue-Ming Yang organized the reception and ordered the food. Carla Lewandowski arranged for seven terrorism scholars and representatives from the Department of Homeland Security and the National Institute of Justice to present 90 second talks about where the field has been, what we are currently doing and/or what future research should focus on.

Scott Decker introduced the speakers and Laura Dugan stressed the importance of focusing on policy to see what works and what does not work on terrorism outcomes. John Horgan called for investing in graduate level research, as well as counteracting statements unsupported by facts. Mark Hamm noted that little terrorism research (less 1%) relies on direct contact with terrorists and endorsed work on interviewing incarcerated terrorists in the US. James Forest discussed how we should we educate future researchers, and the types of data and methods to use study the effectiveness of counter terrorism strategies. Steve Chermak argued that we should compare terrorism groups to other criminal and non-criminal groups and focus more on social media and terrorism recruitment. John Picarelli (NIJ) stated that we need more work on both terrorism financing and bias crimes, as well as increased government funding to support these studies. Rik Legault (DHS) concluded that the government should allocate money for implementation of programs and just not just for their evaluation.

The talks were very well received! At this meeting we also discussed strategies for increasing both membership and fundraising numbers.

Subsequently, (during the 2015-16 year) the DTBC increased its activities. Our membership committee (Nancy Morris, Jennifer Carson, Carla Lewandowski, Sue-Ming Yang) continued to advertise the new Division and drafted a recruitment ad that was sent out to a variety of venues. Jen Carson identified individuals who presented at the ACJS on terrorism related topics but were not yet our members of our Division. In addition, Jen Carson and Carla Lewandowski identified all thematic panels (on both terrorism and bias crimes) of potential interest to our membership for the upcoming 2016 meetings. Nancy Morris purchased a Division banner for use at the annual ASC meetings to cover our information table. In addition to creating and managing our website William Parkin put the list of terrorism and bias crimes related journals compiled by Jack McDevitt and Kelly Welch on the Division website. Gary LaFree also crafted and submitted to ASC the DTBC's annual report in spring 2016.

The 2016 DTBC meeting at ASC occurred in New Orleans. Brian Forst organized a special ASC panel that highlighted themes and issues of importance to our Division. At the DTBC meeting we decided to add a student member to the Board and agreed that this would occur during next year's (2017) election. We also decided to create the first DTBC Award, the Distinguished Scholar award. In addition, we decided to create a syllabi depository, open to all, of undergraduate, graduate, and PhD-level homeland security/terrorism and bias/hate crime courses. Jeff Gruenewald and William Parkin were selected to lead this initiative.

We also discussed a plan for next year's elections. The DTBC membership decided that similar to other Divisions elections to the board should be staggered. Thus, each board member would serve for two years, but elections would occur every year for only half the Board. In odd years there would be elections for chair, vice chair and one executive counselor, while in even years' there would be elections for secretary/treasurer and two executive counselors. Student members only serve a year and this position would be voted for annually. The meeting concluded with an ice cream social, organized by Sue-Ming Yang.

Subsequently, the DTBC executive board created an awards committee (chaired by Joshua Freilich, and including Laura Dugan, Gary LaFree) to manage the DTBC's inaugural 2017 Distinguished Scholar Award. The committee created guidelines that were approved by the Board: The Distinguished Scholar Award honors an individual's sustained and distinguished scholarship, and/or service in the fields of terrorism, bias crimes, or political violence from a criminological perspective. It recognizes an established academic/researcher who has held a Ph.D. degree for at least ten years. The outstanding contributions to the field of terrorism, bias crimes, or political violence from a criminological perspective may consist of a single outstanding book or work, a series of theoretical or research contributions, or the recipient's accumulated scholarly and policy and practice contributions. The Distinguished Scholar Awards committee solicited nominations and after a careful review selected Distinguished Professor Brent L. Smith, PhD, the creator of the ground breaking NIJ and DHS funded American Terrorism Study.

The DTBC also conducted elections that were organized by Brian Forst, Sue-Ming Yang and William Parkin. Joshua Freilich was elected Chair, Steven Chermak was elected Vice Chair, Nancy Morris was elected executive counselor and Brent Klein was elected to the student position. Yang, Dugan, Gruenewald and Parkin continued in their positions on the Board and will be joined by LaFree (emeritus chair).

In addition, student members Brent Klein and Jason Silva identified all thematic panels (on both terrorism and bias crimes) of potential interest to our membership for the upcoming 2017 meetings. The membership committee (Nancy Morris, Jennifer Carson, Carla Lewandowski, Sue-Ming Yang) continued to advertise the new Division and William Parkin continued to maintain the Division website. Gary LaFree also crafted and submitted to ASC the DTBC's annual report in spring 2017.

The 2017 DTBC meeting at ASC occurred in Philadelphia. At this meeting the membership confirmed the decision to stagger the Board elections and Laura Dugan was selected to Chair the Constitutional Review Committee to make these changes to the DTBC's bylaws. The membership also decided to create a second DTBC award to recognize the two best student papers. The membership and fundraising committee (Nancy Morris, Jen Carson and Carla Lewandoski) led a discussion on strategies to increase both membership and fundraising. William Parkin provided an update on the DTBC's website and led a discussion about the DTBC creating a social media presence. It was decided to create a DTBC social media presence and craft guidelines for its use. The social media committee (William Parkin, Jeff Gruenewald, Brent Klein (student representative) and Meagan Abel) was placed in charge of this effort. We also discussed a plan for next year's election.

The meeting's highlight was the presentation of the DTBC's inaugural 2017 Distinguished Scholar Award to Dr. Brent L. Smith to recognize his pioneering work in creating the American Terrorism Study and the award winning book (*Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, SUNY& Press) and journal articles in leading criminal justice journals such as *Criminology*, *Justice Quarterly*, *Criminology & Public Policy* and major terrorism journals such as *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* it produced. Dr. Smith spoke about his decision to study terrorism, his mentors, as well as the key events that occurred over his scholastic career

including his collaboration with the FBI and creation of the ATS. The meeting concluded with a social, organized by Sue-Ming Yang.

After this meeting Gary LaFree ended his term as chair, but remained on the board for one more year as emeritus chair, and Brian Forst completed his term as executive counselor. The new Board (see above) then took office.

Subsequently, the Board created a 2018 Distinguished Scholar Award committee chaired by Laura Dugan, and including Gary LaFree and Joshua Freilich, and a new Student Paper Award committee chaired by Steven Chermak. The Distinguished Scholar Award committee again issued a call for nominations and after a careful review selected leading hate crime scholars, and collaborators, Dr. Valerie Jenness and Dr. Rykken Grattet as the 2018 winners of this award.

Steven Chermak created guidelines for the new annual DTBC Student Paper Awards that were approved by the Board. The guidelines state that the award recognizes the most outstanding student research paper and considers both empirical and theoretical contributions that engage the DTBC's mission. Each paper is scored for its research contribution, integration of prior literature, execution of the research design, and quality of writing. Eligible students must be enrolled in a graduate level program at the time of submission and papers must be authored by graduate students and have not been previously published or accepted for publication at the time of submission. Papers written with faculty members are not eligible. The best paper receives a \$500 award, and the second place paper receives \$250. After a careful review the DTBC selected Kayla Allison and Brent Klein as first place and Sara Doering as second place winners of the 2018 student paper awards.

Nancy Morris continued to chair the DTBC's membership and fundraising committees. Freilich was contacted by Sage publishing who agreed to fund the \$500 DTBC's first place student paper award. In addition, ASC Executive Counselor Chris Eskridge donated \$1,000 to fund the DTBC student paper awards.

The DTBC also conducted elections for Secretary/Treasurer, two Executive Counselors, and its student member. Jeff Gruenewald, Nancy Morris and William Parkin organized the election. Carla Lewandowski was elected secretary/treasurer, Sue-Ming Yang and Pete Simi were elected executive counselors and Leevia Dillon was elected as student representative. Members also approved the change to the bylaws to stagger the elections (see above).

The social media committee (Jeff Gruenewald, William Parkin, Meagan Abel and Brent Klein) crafted proposed social media policies for the DTBC and created a DTBC twitter account managed by Brent Klein.

In addition, LaFree, Freilich, Yang and others began working on this document that described the establishment and history of the DTBC. Student members Brent Klein and Jason Silva identified all thematic panels (on both terrorism and bias crimes) of potential interest to our membership for the upcoming 2018 meetings. William Parkin continued to maintain the Division website. Joshua Freilich crafted and submitted to ASC the DTBC's annual report in spring 2018.

The 2018 DTBC meeting at ASC occurred in Atlanta. At this meeting the Board provided feedback on the proposed DTBC's social media policies. The social media committee agreed to revise and finalize the policies. The Board assigned the chairs of next year's committees and also decided to make the web-manager position a permanent formal member of the executive board with a three year term. The constitutional bylaws committee was tasked with moving forward on this. We discussed a plan for next year's election. The board also discussed strategies to increase both membership and fundraising. William Parkin provided an update on the DTBC's website and the recent ASC decision to centralize all Division websites.

We next presented the first place student paper award to Kayla Allison and Brent Klein, and second place award to Sara Doering. Allison and Klein's paper examined the micro-situational processes of both racial bias homicide and interracial homicide, drawing on situational theories and the doing difference theory of bias crime. They concluded that anti-race homicide is a unique type of racial violence. Doering's paper compared the similarities and differences across right-wing, left-wing, and Islamist extremists and found notable differences. Right-wing extremists possessed more negative traits than Islamist extremists

The meeting's highlight was the presentation of the DTBC's 2018 Distinguished Scholar Award to Dr. Valerie Jenness and Dr. Rykken Grattet for their important research on hate crimes. The award recognized their collaborative path-breaking body of work on hate crime that has consistently been well received by academics, policymakers, and law enforcement officials alike. Their research has deepened understanding of both the social construction of hate crime and the nexus between bias-motivated violence, the law, and law enforcement. Its significant empirical, theoretical and practical contributions across several fields have raised the caliber of scholarship for this important area of research. Dr. Grattet then spoke about his collaboration with Dr. Jenness, how it began, evolved and influenced their research. The meeting concluded with a social, organized by Sue-Ming Yang.

After this meeting Sue-Ming Yang ended her term as treasurer/secretary, Jeff Gruenewald and Laura Dugan ended their terms as executive counselor, and Brent Klein stepped down as student representative. The newly elected Board members (see above) then took office, and Freilich, Chermak and Morris continued to serve for the remaining year of their terms for Chair, Deputy Chair and Executive Counselor, respectively.