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UNH to Lead National Effort to Gather Better Data on Hate Crimes

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DURHAM, N.H.—Researchers at the University of New Hampshire will launch a three-year study to collect nationally representative information on rates and characteristics of hate crime investigations by law enforcement in 2019. Funded by the federal Department of Justice, the effort is expected to improve the reliability and consistency of hate crime data.

“Hate crime reporting is voluntary for law enforcement agencies and there are big gaps,” said Lisa Jones, research associate professor of psychology in the Crimes Against Children Research Center at UNH and lead investigator on the study. “A large percentage of agencies cite an absence of hate crimes, even some in large, high-crime areas, so there are clearly problems with the system that are important to solve. We are hoping our research can help the DOJ plan for ways to improve the reliability of the data on hate crimes, and more generally to improve law enforcement efforts to document and investigate these cases.”

Jones noted that researchers at the CCRC have developed and conducted multiple studies using a successful methodology for getting nationally representative police data about particular crimes.

“We have used this methodology to study internet crimes against children and juvenile sex trafficking investigations and we are pleased to have an opportunity now to apply this methodology to hate crime investigations,” she said. “Even though these crimes don’t always involve children, children and youth are highly and negatively affected by hate and bias victimizations in their communities.”

The three-year study, recently highlighted by the U.S. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein at a law enforcement roundtable on hate crimes, will involve a survey of 3,000 law enforcement agencies across the country and 250 prosecutors. The study will look at what types of crimes and offenders are being investigated, and which law enforcement investigation policies and practices seem to be promising in terms of responding to these crimes and protecting victims.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.



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