



Dawn Beichner-Thomas

Curriculum Vitae

Dawn Beichner-Thomas is a professor in the Criminal Justice Sciences Department and Women's and Gender Studies Program at Illinois State University. She co-directs a post-graduate course on Victimology, Victim Assistance, and Criminal Justice each year at the Inter University Centre of Dubrovnik, Croatia. Dr. Beichner-Thomas is chair of the American Society of Criminology's (ASC) Division of International Criminology and is a board member of Dreams Are Possible, a non-profit organization that provides educational and vocational training to women.

My role as a member of the WSV Executive Committee

I was elected to the WSV executive committee in 2018 and re-elected to a second term in 2024. In 2022, I was appointed as the Chair of the United Nations Liaison Committee. Through my role as an NGO representative, I have participated as an NGO observer in the Intergovernmental Expert Group Meetings on Reducing Reoffending Through Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation and those connected to the development of model strategies on reducing reoffending.

In 2023, I was invited to join the UN Women delegation as a global scholar for the Sixth Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Leaders' Forum in Quito, Ecuador.

Along with colleagues Dr. Rosemary Barberet (International Sociological Association, Criminologists Without Borders) and Dr. Sheetal Ranjan (ASC Division of Feminist Criminology), I co-organize parallel events held in conjunction with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) annually. Each collaborative panel—centered on Feminist Approaches to Justice—includes scholars, policy makers, and advocates representing multiple world regions. In conjunction with each CSW, we publish a guest-edited special issue of an academic journal. To date, we have published four special issues: *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* (Volume 9, Issue 1, 2020), *Violence Against Women* (Volume 28, Issue 8, 2022), the *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*



(Volume 47, Issue 2, 2023), *Feminist Criminology* (Volume 19, Issue 4, 2024), and have a 2025 issue forthcoming in the *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*.

What inspires you to work for victims' rights?

As a scholar and advocate, I know how important it is to bridge the gap between research and policy. Whether I am working in my local community or representing the WSV at the United Nations, my focus is always to keep victims at the center. This approach ensures that victims and their experiences inform our policies and practices.

My research focuses on the intersection of victimization and criminalization. Many incarcerated individuals, including those with whom I have worked directly, have histories of trauma and abuse that have shaped their pathways to prison. Recognizing the harms of mass incarceration, both to those who are incarcerated and to their loved ones, has inspired my advocacy for restorative justice practices and alternatives to incarceration.

I believe that *all* victims—including those who are involved in the criminal legal system—deserve not only justice, but respect, protection, and dignity. That is what motivates me to do this work.

Contact information

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