

Violence Reduction Initiative Forum #2 November 13, 2013 | UNCW CIS Building

UNCW 's Dr. Earl Sheridan hosted a second in a series of community forums with the City of Wilmington on a violence reduction initiative. Three faculty members presented statistics and case studies around crime.

- Moderator: Dr. Aaron King, Public and International Affairs, UNCW
- Participants: Drs. Craig Burnett (Public and International Affairs); Cecil Willis (Sociology and Criminology); Donyell Rosborough (Watson College of Education)

Dr Burnett

- Individuals do not link more guns with more crime or violence.
- A increasingly partisan issue, more southern, more republican.
- No real strong support for gun control, politically.

Dr. Willis

- U.S. more likely to kill with gun than any society in world.
- Gun homicides decreased in last five years, except for pockets - and Wilmington is one.
- Gun suicides exceed homicides.
- # of homes with guns down, but those with them increased
- Guns are handier, accessible, powerful, and meaningful.
- Still #1 reason for gun purchase is to self-protect.

Dr. Rosborough

- Hard to teach by telling kids to leave problems of home at door. Their home is their environment.
- Hip hop promotes the ghetto! Ghetto values of how to get from rags to riches surpasses the status quo and the notion of Obama becoming President, as example.
- Our culture teaches what is/is not possible. Hard for 6 hours of school to refute.
- Don't look at overall school numbers but sub numbers, how black males are doing.
- Perhaps short term suspensions which lead to expulsion and drop out, along with interface with law enforcement system, needs to be examined.
- It is easier for kids to believe in the "ScarFace" example for success than President
- Zero tolerance in schools may exacerbate the Path to Prison syndrome for minority students.

Possible ideas:

- Support safer Schools Initiative (Dr. Barth, Ben David)
- Recognize it is not people but places and situations that create violence.
- Most kids are not involved in gang violence; don't treat them as if they do.
- Good kids can be placed in bad situations and yield a bad outcome.

- Inequitable funding of schools by states and within states can create pockets of violence. Need funding based on the quality and needs of the specific schools.
- Make reading proficiency a priority; there is no substitute for this
- Teach problem solving in schools.
- It is all about economics. Need to provide skills for youth to make it with above ground vs. under-ground economies
- Improve graduation rates.
- Give teachers culture training to be better successful in inner city schools
- Think of Christ's rewarding of those working in vineyards.