

Presentation title:

## The Scandinavian prison project: preliminary findings

**Speakers:** Synøve Andersen (University of Oslo, Norway) and Jordan M. Hyatt (Drexel University, USA)

The Scandinavian Prison Project (SPP) is a research project focused on an ongoing, international collaboration between the correctional services in Pennsylvania (PA) and Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark), which aims to empirically examine the transferability and adaptability of Scandinavian correctional principles and practices to an American prison context. Beginning in 2019, a team of front-line officers, managers, and leaders from the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Chester traveled to all three countries to learn about their respective approaches to supervision and specific challenges. The goal of these efforts was to facilitate the officer-led development of a housing unit that, to the extent possible, reflected their experiences with Scandinavian values and practices. The resulting unit, which includes single cells, a commercial kitchen, and a dedicated green space, is run by specially trained staff. The unit differs from the regular conditions of confinement in three primary ways: the structural layout, the level of staff training, and the unit policies – especially those that govern the relationships between staff and incarcerated people. After a pilot period, the unit known as “Little Scandinavia” became operational in May of 2022. This presentation focuses on the preliminary research findings regarding the impact of the unit on prison climate as experienced by both officers and incarcerated people.