



***Katherine A. Meeker***

Dissertation Defense  
College of Criminal Justice  
Department of Criminal Justice  
and Criminology  
Ph.D. in Criminal Justice

### **Does Age Difference Matter?: An Examination of Arrest and Initial Charging in Sexual Assault Cases**

Due to sexual assault case processing being plagued with attrition, scholars have explored officer and prosecutorial decision making to understand why some sexual assault cases proceed through the criminal-legal system while other cases do not. Despite research examining various factors that influence case processing decision making, few studies have examined the influence of suspect-victim age difference on sexual assault case outcomes. In response, the current study used 650 sexual assault case files reported to Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles Police Department to examine the influence of suspect-victim age difference on police officers' decision to arrest a suspect and prosecutors' decision to file an initial charge. Empirical, theoretical, and policy implications as well as considerations for future scholarship are discussed.

#### Event Information

Friday, March 29th  
8:30am  
Zoom

#### Committee Members

Elisa Toman  
Chelsey Narvey  
Kathleen Ratajczak



**Sam Houston State University**

**PUBLIC DEFENSE ANNOUNCEMENT**