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## **SOCIAL THREATS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON COURT OUTCOMES TOPIC OF AWARD-WINNING PAPER BY K-STATE DOCTORAL STUDENT IN SOCIOLOGY**

MANHATTAN — A Kansas State University graduate student's paper that examines how social threat may influence individual criminal court outcomes has been honored as the best in a competition sponsored by the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association.

"Enemies at the Gate: Toward a Theory of Court-Level Racial Threat" by Travis Linnemann, doctoral student in sociology, Manhattan, was selected the top paper in the association's 2007 Student Paper Competition.

Linnemann, who also earned a master's in sociology from K-State in 2006, was recognized at the annual conference of the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association, Sept. 27-29, in Chicago. His paper also will be considered for publication in the *Journal of Crime and Justice*.

It's the second honor garnered by Linnemann for his "Enemies at the Gate." The paper also received first place in the social science and education category at K-State's 2007 Graduate Research Forum in March.

Linnemann's paper was based on quantitative research involving a large sample of felony court data on criminal offenders, their offense and their court outcomes.

Examining the impact of race on criminal sentencing, Linnemann said findings suggest that courts that process a high volume of minorities and drug and violent offenders are more likely to sentence the defendants to prison and impose sentences of greater length than courts that process a relatively low volume of such cases. He said the findings support assertions regarding the influence of such social threats at the court level.

Entries in the Midwestern Criminal Justice Association competition were judged on the significance of the topic; contribution to the area of study; command of the relevant work in the field of study; appropriate use of methodology; and the quality of writing. The association is a criminology/criminal justice scholarship association of colleges and universities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin and in the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.