

SPEA Criminal Justice

Program Assessment Plan

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I. IDENTIFIED MEASURABLE EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Mission Statement

The mission of the program is to provide an education in criminal justice using a multidisciplinary approach that will empower students as critical thinkers, effective oral communicators, and competent writers in subject matters of crime and criminal justice. The program will prepare students to think critically about the problems of crime and justice as citizens that, in turn, will enable them to perform effectively and ethically in the criminal justice arena.

Goals

1. Exhibit an understanding of and the ability to apply criminological theories in explaining social policy and crime
2. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze public policy issues as they pertain to criminal justice issues
3. Increase knowledge of the structure, function, and operation of police, courts, and corrections
4. Apply basic techniques of research methodology in the study of criminal justice
5. Understand how criminal justice agencies function from a broader perspective of public affairs
6. Demonstrate the ability to apply communication, computer, and mathematical skills to content specific information in criminal justice
7. Demonstrate the ability to integrate various learning experiences from required core courses

II. METHODOLOGY FOR MEASURING THE ATTAINMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The Criminal Justice Program uses several methods to assess students in the major including course embedded assessment, senior exit surveys, alumni surveys, and employer surveys. In combination these methods allow us to better understand whether students have gained discipline specific knowledge and skills, personal development and career preparation, and basic academic skills. Assessing the student's development in higher order thinking skills and academic achievement comes predominately through

assessment of students' performance on individual course assignments including essays, papers, projects, presentations, and examinations. For example, the capstone course (J439) requires students to use higher order thinking and academic knowledge in responding to essay questions designed to have them integrate information gained from previous courses, current events, and life experiences. The research and statistic courses (J202 and K300) require students to demonstrate the ability to apply communication, the application of basic research methodology techniques, computer, and statistical analysis skills to content specific information in criminal justice. Assignments in the introductory course (J101), the policing course (J321), and the corrections course (J331) require students to demonstrate their understanding of the structure and basic functions of the three general criminal justice components – police, courts, and corrections.

The senior exit surveys are administered every semester and results are tabulated and distributed in report form in the third year review. This will be done in 2007. The areas of questions include:

- General feedback on course content on eight required courses
- Offerings of electives
- Rotation of classes
- Advising assistance
- Strengths and Weaknesses of the program
- Involvement in internship
- Participation in and attendance at Criminal Justice Program sponsored events
- Employment goals
- Plans for graduate school

The alumni and employer surveys are administered every third year and the results are tabulated and distributed in report form every third year. This will be done in 2007. The areas of questions for the alumni survey include:

- Employment after graduation
- Use of degree in current employment
- Enrollment in graduate programs
- Academic preparation
- Usefulness of Criminal Justice Program sponsored events
- Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program
- Involvement in Internship while a student

The areas of questions for the employer survey include:

- Importance of areas of knowledge or skills for employment success
- Work behavior emphasis
- Preparedness of IUSB Criminal Justice graduates in specific skill and knowledge areas
- Use of interns

Plans have also been made to establish pre/post measurements for all eight required courses of the major. It is anticipated that these instruments will be ready for use starting in the fall of 2006. The data results from this method of analysis will be helpful in developing and revising course objectives, requirements, and assessment measures.

III. PROCESS FOR USING ASSESSMENT FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Reports on all assessment activities are shared with all criminal justice faculty and Division Dean. These reports include the assessment grant reports which provide the results of the surveys and the annual and third year reports. Faculty meetings and retreats are used to discuss the results and to make changes in the curriculum based on assessment. For example, both exiting senior and alumni survey data indicated that students were dissatisfied with what they saw as a lack of career preparation and assistance. This feedback was used in the development of a course on Career Development (V252) which was offered first in the spring of 2005 and is on the plan to be offered each spring semester. Employer feedback indicated that graduates were weak in writing skills. This information led to the increase of writing assignments in several classes and referrals for writing assistance to the campus writing resource. A Self-Study was conducted in the summer of 2005 utilizing the services of an outside peer reviewer. The reviewer was provided with assessment reports and this information, as well as interviews with faculty, students, and administrators led to several recommendations for improvements in the program. The faculty has met several times to discuss these recommendations and make plans for implementation of changes. A review of the advising protocol has also been conducted and led to a change in assignment of transfer students and sophomore through senior students to faculty advisors. Feedback from the senior exit and alumni surveys led to discussions between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty on course objectives.

IV. PARTICIPATION OF ALL CONSTITUENCIES

Faculty

All full-time faculty are involved in the development of assessment activities through discussions held at monthly faculty meetings as well as annual retreats. Adjunct faculty are involved in assessment activities through annual meetings between full and part time faculty and the Division Dean.

Students

Students are involved in assessment activities through their participation in responding to surveys. Students also complete course evaluations every semester which is a two part process: 1) an objective scoring of course information, instructor characteristics, and overall rating and, 2) a narrative feedback form asking about what the students liked best and least about the course/instructor and additional comments.

Alumni

Alumni are administered a survey every third year and the Alumni Advisory Board meets annually. Next round of surveys will be in 2007.

Employers

Local, regional, and national employers are administered a survey every third year. Next round of surveys will be in 2007.

Advisory Boards

The Community Advisory Council meets 2-3 times per year and reviews policy, helps with plans for recruitment of students, and assists in fund-raising.

V. RECORD KEEPING

All assessment related documents and materials are kept by the assessment committee liaison as well as having been sent to the University Assessment Committee.

The Criminal Justice Program plans to develop a web-link for assessment reports through the SPEA Home Page.