

California State University, Stanislaus
Department of Criminal Justice
Assessment Report
2006-07

MISSION

The Criminal Justice Department at California State University, Stanislaus is committed to providing a superior, comprehensive educational program in criminal justice studies for undergraduates, graduate students, and practicing professionals in the criminal justice field. The program is designed to create educationally well-rounded, successful and contributory members of society, as well as competent criminal justice professionals. To this end, students are provided opportunities to develop critical thinking skills; the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; and acquire an understanding of and appreciation for diversity at local, national and global levels. Students are grounded in the ever-evolving academic perspectives on criminal justice; in legal and socio-political aspects; in practical methods and techniques; as well as in the developing body of research pertinent to the field. Students are challenged to consider the role and limits of criminal justice in a democratic society in light of rapidly changing domestic and global socio-political environments. Finally, students are encouraged to investigate career opportunities and practices in the field, and to integrate theory and practice through supervised professional training and partnerships.

PROGRAM GOALS

The CSU Stanislaus Department of Criminal Justice:

- provides instruction in the theories, structure, operation, methods and research findings that are relevant to the Criminal Justice field;
- provides opportunities for students to apply what is learned to relevant phenomena in the field; values that are shared by professionals in the field;
- provides students with a broad and informed knowledge base, as well as the necessary conceptual and analytical skills, for entering careers in diverse fields including law enforcement, corrections, investigations, forensics and law; for graduate school; and for on-going professional training;
- provides awareness of the cross-cultural and diversity issues associated with an increasingly complex and interdependent global environment.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS/ OBJECTIVES

Upon completing the major in Criminal Justice, students will meet the CJ student's learning goals, as follows.

1. Critical and Analytical Thinking: be able competently to challenge theories, philosophies, values and methods associated with traditional perspectives on Criminal Justice in oral and written discourse; and to

separate things into their constituent elements in order to study or examine them, see relationships, draw conclusions, or solve problems

2. Communication: be able effectively to articulate ideas orally and in writing, using appropriate language and writing styles as commonly practiced in legal and social science environments
3. Criminal Justice System Expertise: be able to identify and describe the nature, operation and problems of the various components of the Criminal Justice system
4. Professional Knowledge: be able to transform the pedagogical information from lectures, course materials, assignments and research into an integrated body of knowledge relevant to the Criminal Justice field
5. Diversity and Intercultural Competence: be able to recognize and understand the roles that race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other facets of diversity have in Criminal Justice in a global context

WHAT DATA WERE COLLECTED AND HOW?

We used the existing internship evaluation process to assess the first of our department's 5 Student Learning Objectives: "4. Professional Knowledge: be able to transform the pedagogical information from lectures, course materials, assignments and research into an integrated body of knowledge relevant to the Criminal Justice field."

Approximately 25% of Criminal Justice Students enter the internship program each year, typically during their 3rd or 4th year. While this means that using the internship process for assessment purposes does not allow for 100% coverage of all senior CJ students, the sample is considered adequately representative of all senior year students.

Currently, internship students are formally evaluated twice during the semester, at mid-term and at the end. Supervisors complete a form that measures various criteria deemed important for successful completion of the internship experience. As part of the assessment process, we added to adjust the list of criteria to target Professional Knowledge. After achieving departmental consensus as to the specific items to be used, the evaluation form was modified. The revised form was in place in time for the final evaluation period at the end of the 2006-2007 academic year. We received 17 forms from the various internship sites and the data were processed and evaluated.

HOW DID FACULTY USE THE DATA? WHEN DID FACULTY MEET TO DISCUSS FINDINGS?

We will be meeting to discuss the results and other assessment matters at our upcoming faculty retreat October 11, 2007.

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING WERE MADE?

Preliminarily, we learned that the relevance of the learning goal "professional knowledge" really varies by internship location. We might consider tailoring the assessment questions to the site.

We still need to develop a technique(s) that will allow us to assess the other four learning goals, although we likely will have to modify these in light of the changes in our curriculum.

We are in the process of a significant curriculum change that will go into effect Fall 2008. This change was not a result of the current assessment plan. We are tailoring more of our course offerings toward more selected groups of students. For instance, right now all our students are required to take Legal Research and Writing. Now, only those in the new Criminal Legal Studies concentration will be required to take it. The General Concentration is being eliminated. There is a new concentration in Juvenile Justice. In addition, there are some new courses and others will be re-vamped. Meanwhile, we will be figuring out how to integrate the changes. We will have to offer 2 curricula at the same time, the old and the new, until all "old" students are graduated out.

Obviously, all of this impacts some of many of our program and learning goals as we have already laid them out. While this renders moot implementing the rest of the existing CJ assessment plan, it does provide us with the opportunity to more fully integrate assessment into our program. In fact, as a faculty we are presenting the CSUS assessment plan at a conference in October 2007 and our faculty retreat next month is focused on revising our assessment plan.