

California State University, Stanislaus

Program Assessment Update

Criminal Justice

College Year: 2008 – 2009

Learning Objective: *Criminal Justice System Expertise* – be able to identify and describe the nature, operation and problems of the various components of the Criminal Justice system

Method or approach to assessing above student learning objective:

During the fall semester of 2008, CJ faculty were asked to forward five to ten multiple-choice questions central to the 11 courses required of all Criminal Justice majors. Faculty were asked to submit questions only for the courses they have instructed. Of the 11 courses, questions were submitted for seven courses. Of the questions submitted, 40 were used. This 40 question assessment on Criminal Justice Expertise was then completed at the end of the spring 2009 semester by two groups of students, based largely on convenience sampling. The first group included students in the Introduction to Criminal Justice course (n = 77). The second group included graduating seniors in two Criminal Justice Research Methods course as well as a snowball sample of other graduating seniors (n = 66). Graduating seniors were further divided according to those who had (n = 39) and had not (n = 27) attended at least four semesters at a two-year institution of higher education. Since most assessment questions were derived from upper-division courses, the sample of graduating seniors is considered academically homogenous in relation to this assessment.

The following is a breakdown required course question. Due to a recent program change, two courses were omitted that are no longer required*

- CJ 2250: Introduction to Criminal Justice
- CJ 2270: Criminal Investigations
- CJ 2280: Criminal Law**
- CJ 2450: Criminal Judicial Process*
- CJ 3120: Causes of Crime (or SOCI 3120: Criminology)
- CJ 3170: Criminal Justice Research Methods
- CJ 4140: Criminal Procedures I
- CJ 4151: Criminal Procedures II
- CJ 4230: Juvenile Justice

* Because Criminal Procedures II is considered a continuation of Criminal Procedures I, they are considered a single course for purposes of assessment.

** Questions for these courses were not submitted to the assessment coordinator.

Overall, graduating seniors fared better on the assessment questions. Assessment scores for the introductory CJ students reported an average of 35% correct answers. The low score was zero and the high score was 24 (60% correct). The assessment scores for graduating seniors showed a 56% correct average. The low score was 12 (30% correct) and the high score was 29 (73% correct). On average, graduating seniors scored 60% higher than the introductory students. For most questions, graduating seniors scored, on average, better than the introductory CJ students. Detailed item analysis is presented in the Appendix.

Information provided in this assessment area will be discussed during the initial departmental meeting, fall 2009.