

Criminal Justice Graduate Program (M.S.) Assessment Yearly Report

Submitted: December 1, 2009

Reporting Year: 2008-2009

Part I: Criminal Justice Graduate Program Mission

The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology is committed to those items enumerated in the mission statements of Marshall University and its College of Liberal Arts. The Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice is designed to provide post-baccalaureate education to criminal justice professionals and traditional students that will prepare them for careers, career advancement, and advanced study in criminal justice and criminology. Our faculty assist students to develop, enhance, analyze, and apply the *knowledge, skills, and attitudes* necessary to evaluate, understand, and resolve complex problems confronting the criminal justice system.

Our mission supports the mission of the university in the following ways:

- “Use their knowledge, creativity, and critical thinking skills to make their communities better places in which to live” (supported by the Department’s mission statement and Goals 1 and 2).
- “Examine critically, the many issues facing society and through the process of civil discourse, prepare themselves to become socially responsible individuals who contribute to the betterment of society” (supported by the Department’s mission statement, Goal 2, Objective 2a and Goal 3, Objectives 3a and 3b).
- “Appreciate and to cultivate diversity, and to value differences” (supported by the Department’s mission statement and Goal 3, Objective 3a).
- “Undertake intensive graduate-level education in their chosen fields upon admission to graduate school, giving them solid foundations for becoming competent professionals” (supported by the Department’s mission statement and Goals 1-3).

Part II. Criminal Justice Graduate Program’s Student Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: Knowledge

The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop advanced student knowledge of criminological theory, criminal law and procedure, planning, research methods and statistics necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences.

Objectives:

- 1a. To develop advanced knowledge of criminological theories.
- 1b. To develop advanced knowledge of research methods.
- 1c. To develop advanced knowledge of statistical analysis.
- 1d. To develop advanced knowledge of the adjudication of law.
- 1e. To develop advanced knowledge of planning, program design, and program evaluation.

Goal 2: Skills

The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop or enhance students' skills in critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, statistical analysis, and planning skills necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences.

Objectives:

- 2a. To enhance students' critical thinking skills related to criminal justice theory and practice.
- 2b. To enhance oral communication skills.
- 2c. To enhance written communication skills.
- 2d. To enhance research skills by evaluating scholarly literature via the library database and internet database searches.
- 2e. To develop or enhance skills in the use of statistics software and the interpretation and application of data.

Goal 3: Attitudes

The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop or enhance students' awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse nature of social problems and human interactions in criminal justice and criminology and their abilities to respond ethically.

Objectives:

- 3a. To develop or enhance students' awareness and of and sensitivity to human, social, and cultural diversity.
- 3b. To develop or enhance students' awareness of sensitivity to the complex nature of social problems that relate to crime and to the practice of criminal justice and criminology.
- 3c. To examine, evaluate, and apply ethical principles of the discipline in regard to research, use of sources, collaboration with colleagues, and principled decision/policy making.

Part III. Assessment Activities

Please see the attached chart which includes the Assessment Measures (Tools), Benchmarks, Results/Analysis, and Analysis/Planned Action.

Part IV. Overview of Implemented Changes

Several changes have been made since last year's report. The department has been engaged in many discussions about the program's effectiveness, its adaptation to new technologies and current criminal justice issues, and its goals. Over the past year, the program has been fully engaged in making changes and improvements to the criminal justice curriculum. However, given few number of full-time faculty in the department and time constraints, much of the change has been devoted to the undergraduate curriculum. Thus, smaller steps to revise and modify the graduate program are evident here. Also, it should be noted that many of the changes in this report do not pertain to changes to our program directly, but reflect the changes that have been made in the last year to assess our program in a more meaningful way. With this data and future data, we hope the Department will be in a position to make constructive program-related changes. The implemented changes as to how we assess our program are listed below:

- The first and most obvious change is to our program's mission, goals and objectives. A new mission statement was created and approved by the faculty in Fall 2008. It is now clear that

our program is one where building graduate-level knowledge, skills, and attitudes are essential to the education that we provide to our students. Moreover, as a department we unanimously agreed that we want our students to graduate from our program with the ability to evaluate, understand, and resolve complex problems in the criminal justice system. In addition, three new overarching program goals were developed, and as a result, 13 new measureable students learning outcomes were developed. This in itself has been a huge undertaking for our department of six full-time faculty.

- Five direct assessment measures were implemented in Fall 2008/Spring 2009 (they include: the graduate comprehensive exam scoring rubric, the comprehensive exam rubric for the theory section, measures from CJ 604 -Advanced Theory in Criminal Justice, CJ 655 - Research Methods in Criminal Justice, and CJ 656 -Applied Statistics in Criminal Justice).
- Indirect measures, such as the Graduate Student Exit Survey, Alumni Survey, and Assessment Day Focus Group Interviews have been removed as tools to assess student learning outcomes, and instead, is now part of our effort to provide the program with general feedback; this data will be used for the 5 year review only.
- To oversee the assessment process in the department, two faculty members have agreed to take on the position of Co-Assessors. An Assessment committee was established as well.
- A draft curriculum map has been created for the graduate program (see below).

Curriculum Map: Courses that Incorporate Learning Outcomes

	1a.	1b.	1c.	1d.	1e.	2a.	2b.	2c.	2d.	2e.	3a.	3b.	3c.
CJ 602						x	x				x	x	x
CJ 603					x	x	x	x	x				
CJ 604	x					x	x					x	
CJ 621				x		x		x	x				
CJ 655		x				x		x	x				x
CJ 656			x			x				x			

Part V. Changes/Modifications to the Criminal Justice Program (based on data obtained during Assessment Day)

Upon reflection on the data collected during Assessment Day 2009, some changes were made to our program and the way in which we assess it. These changes include:

- Changes were made to the assessment procedures. That is, the co-assessors and department chair developed at least two measures for each learning objective.
- More direct measures of learning outcomes were developed.
- Indirect measures were put into place and modifications were made to the Graduate Exit Survey and the Comprehensive Exam Rubric.
- The concentration section of the comprehensive exam was removed as few courses were offered in one area to create an actual concentration.
- Procedures were put into place for graduate students to take core courses in sequence, that is, students admitted to the program in the fall are enrolled in CJ 602 -Law and Social Control. This is a foundations course and seminar, which allows students to refresh their knowledge in criminal justice history and research. In addition, it allows students from a non-criminal justice undergraduate background to gain familiarly with the issues relevant to

our discipline. However, this sequence is not always possible, especially with students admitted to the program in the spring semester.

- Each full-time faculty member was assigned to teach at least one of the 600-level, required core courses. Plus, efforts were made to ensure that adjunct faculty who teach 500 level courses include appropriate graduate-level course requirements.

Part VI. Assistance Needed with Assessment

At this point in time, the Department is not requesting any assistance from the Office of Assessment.

Respectfully submitted,



Dhruba J. Bora, Department Chair
Kimberly DeTardo-Bora, Co-Assessor
Angela Crews, Co-Assessor

Marshall University
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes for the Criminal Justice Program (M.S.)

Fall 2009

Goal 1: Knowledge
 The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop advanced student knowledge of criminological theory, criminal law and procedure, planning, research methods and statistics necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
1a. To develop advanced knowledge of criminological theories.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam	100% of students will score average or higher. 100% of students will score above average or higher (B).	100% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the written portion of the exam. 94% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the oral portion of the exam. 100% (n = 11) of students scored above average or higher on the midterm exam. 91% (n = 11) of students scored above average or higher on the final exam.	-As the department has begun to develop and implement tools to assess student knowledge from the graduate comprehensive exam, we have found that our benchmark of scoring average or higher on the exam should be revisited. Specifically, the department is at a point of deciding to make the benchmark one where graduate students must score above average or higher on the exam instead.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
1b. To develop advanced knowledge of research methods.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam	100% of students will score average or higher.	<p>76% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the written portion of the exam.</p> <p>70.5% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the oral portion of the exam.</p> <p>62.5% (n = 8) of students scored above average or higher on the midterm exam.</p> <p>87.5% (n = 8) of students scored above average or higher on the final exam.</p> <p>100% (n = 8) of students scored above average or higher in the course, overall.</p>	<p>-More detailed assessment tools are being developed to better assess the areas in which students have difficulty when it comes to research methods. That way, changes can be made to the course in which methods is instructed. Traditionally, this is a difficult course for students.</p> <p>-Scores here reflect that some students struggle to acquire knowledge about research methods. However, improvements were noted from midterm to final exam.</p>

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
1.c. To develop advanced knowledge of statistical analysis.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam CJ 656 exams and final exam scores	100% of students will score average or higher.	Not assessed. 42.8% (n = 7) of students scored above average or higher on the first exam. 57% (n = 7) of students scored above average or higher on the second exam. 42.8% (n = 7) of students scored above average or higher on the final exam. 57% (n = 7) of students scored above average or higher in the course, overall.	-While students are tested on their knowledge of statistics, there is no proper measurement tool to adequately assess it. These measurements have been developed and are being piloted for the Fall 2009 comprehensive exams. -Statistics is the most difficult course for our graduate students. Appropriate steps have been taken to examine the curriculum and identify pedagogical techniques in which students can acquire statistical knowledge.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
1d. To develop advanced knowledge of the adjudication of law.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam	100% of students will score average or higher.	76% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the written portion of the exam. 100% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the oral portion of the exam.	-A more specific rubric/tool is being developed to properly assess students' knowledge of law at the graduate level. This tool will be piloted for Spring 2010.
1e. To develop advanced knowledge of planning, program design, and program evaluation.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam	100% of students will score average or higher.	88% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the written portion of the exam. 82% (n = 17) scored average to superior on the oral portion of the exam.	- A measurement has been developed to assess students' knowledge of planning and program evaluation; the instrument is being piloted for the Fall 2009 comprehensive exams.
		CJ 603 midterm and final exam scores	100% of students will score above average or higher (B).	Not assessed.	

Goal 2: Skills

The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop or enhance students' skills in critical thinking, written communication, oral communication, statistical analysis, and planning skills necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/Planned Actions
2a. To enhance students' critical thinking skills related to criminal justice theory and practice.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam (Theory, Planning, and Research Methods sections)	100% of students will score average or higher.	100% (n = 9) of students scored average or higher on critical thinking on the theory section of the comprehensive exam.	-There is a portion of the theory exam where students are required to apply a criminological theory to a current criminal justice issue. Five students out of nine demonstrated superior critical thinking skills, while 4 demonstrated average critical thinking skills.
		CJ 603 Final Project		Not assessed.	-An instrument is in place and ready for implementation in CJ 603 for Fall 2010.
2b. To enhance oral communication skills.	2008 /09	CJ 602 Presentations CJ 603 Presentations CJ 604 Presentations	100% of students will score above average or higher (B).	Not assessed.	-A standardized rubric will be developed and utilized for assessing oral communication skills across courses; the tool will be ready for implementation by Fall 2010.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
2c. To enhance written communication skills.	2008 /09	Graduate Comprehensive Exam (Theory section) CJ 603 Final Project CJ 655 Final Proposal CJ 621 Paper	100% of students will score average or higher.	100% (n = 9) of students scored average or higher on composition and mechanics on the theory section of the comprehensive exam. Not assessed.	-No students were deemed weak on this portion of the exam. -A standardized rubric will be developed and utilized for assessing written communication skills across courses; the tool will be ready for implementation by Fall 2010.
2d. To enhance research skills by evaluating scholarly literature via the library database and internet database searches.	2008/09	CJ 655 Research Assignment CJ 621 Research Assignment	100% of students will score above average or higher (B).	Not assessed.	-Assessment instruments will be implemented in Fall 2010.
2e. To develop or enhance skills in the use of statistics software and the interpretation and application of data.	2008 /09	CJ 656 SPSS Introductory Assignment and SPSS Advanced Assignment	100% of students will score above average or higher (B).	Not assessed.	-Two assessment tools will be created and implemented in Spring 2010.

Goal 3: Attitudes
The Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will develop or enhance students' awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse nature of social problems and human interactions in criminal justice and criminology and their abilities to respond ethically.

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/Planned Actions
3a. To develop or enhance students' awareness and of and sensitivity to human, social, and cultural diversity.	2008/09	Attitude survey (taken upon graduate registration and upon graduation from the program)	70% of students will "strongly agree" or "agree."	Not assessed.	-A Pre/Post assessment tool will be developed for Fall 2010.
3b. To develop or enhance students' awareness of sensitivity to the complex nature of social problems that relate to crime and to the practice of criminal justice and criminology.	2008/09	Attitude survey (taken upon graduate registration and upon graduation from the program) CJ 602 midterm and final exam	70% of students will "strongly agree" or "agree."	Not assessed.	-A Pre/Post assessment tool will be developed for Fall 2010.
3c. To examine, evaluate, and apply ethical principles of the discipline in regard to research, use of sources, collaboration with colleagues, and principled decision/policy making.	2008/09	Attitude survey (taken upon graduate registration and upon graduation from the program) CJ 655-applicable items from the midterm exam	70% of students will "strongly agree" or "agree."	Not assessed.	-A Pre/Post assessment tool will be developed for Fall 2010.