

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

**Submitted: December 1, 2010**

**Reporting Year: 2009-2010**

### **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 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**

Students in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will demonstrate advanced 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:**

Upon completion of this program, students will be able to:

- 1a. identify and explain various criminological theories and to identify associated theorist(s).
- 1b. identify and explain various types of qualitative and quantitative research methods
- 1c. identify and explain various types of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques
- 1d. identify and explain various concepts in the adjudication of law.
- 1e. identify and explain components of and relationships among, planning, program design, and program evaluation.

**Goal 2: Skills**

Students in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will demonstrate skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, research, and data analysis necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences.

**Objectives:**

Upon completion of this program, students will be able to:

2a. demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills by 1) evaluating, comparing, and contrasting various criminological theories and *applying various criminological theories* to criminal and delinquent behaviors; 2) evaluating, comparing, and contrasting various types of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and *designing and conducting qualitative and quantitative research*; 3) evaluating a criminal, delinquent, or social problem, *designing a program or policy* to resolve it, and *designing an evaluation* of that program or policy; and 4) analyze social, cultural, and political events and a classic piece of criminal justice/criminology literature from a selected time period in U.S. history, *explaining the relationships among the events, the literature, and criminal justice practice or criminological theory*.

2b. demonstrate oral communication skills by *developing and delivering oral presentations* in various classes.

2c. demonstrate written communication skills by *developing and submitting written products* in various classes.

2d. demonstrate advanced research skills by 1) finding, critically evaluating, summarizing, and *using information from scholarly literature* to support an argument or program or policy proposal; 2) properly constructing written work in *APA format*, using APA style; 3) critically evaluating, comparing, and contrasting various types of *qualitative and quantitative research methods* and selecting appropriate methods for various problems.

2e. critically evaluate, compare, and contrast various types of *qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques*, select the most appropriate technique(s) to analyze data, use statistics software (SPSS) whenever applicable, interpret and apply the data to the problem, and identify and explain implications of findings.

**Goal 3: Attitudes**

Students in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of human, social, and cultural diversity on the criminal justice system, to the complexity of the relationships among social problems, human interactions, and the criminal justice system, and to the ethical dilemmas sometimes arise within these relationships.

**Objectives:**

Upon completion of this program, students will be able to:

3a. identify, describe, and explain various human, social, and cultural diversities, and how these diversities impact the criminal justice system and the processing of individuals through the criminal justice system.

3b. identify, describe, and explain complex relationships among social problems, human interactions, and the criminal justice system.

3c. recognize, explain, and propose solutions to ethical issues in criminal justice research and practice.

**Table 1: 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	x	
CJ 603	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x	
CJ 604	x					x	x	x	x			x	
CJ 621				x		x		x	x				x
CJ 655		x				x	x	x	x		x	x	x
CJ 656			x			x				x			

\*Items in yellow indicate proposed revisions to the Curriculum Map, either indicating that the course could be used for measuring a particular objective (x) or removing the course as an indicator (e.g., CJ602, 3c.). These suggestions have not been approved by the faculty yet.

### **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**

Over the past year, our faculty has been fully engaged in discussing the necessary changes to provide our students with a quality education. Some improvements have been made to the graduate curriculum, namely with regards to the comprehensive exams. Yet still, our undergraduate curriculum because of its size is often our primary focus, which trumps our abilities to implement changes at the graduate level immediately.

With that said, we have made significant progress and attempted to adopt assessment instruments that will allow us to better understand the ways in which are program is functioning. Please keep in mind that this is the second year in which our department has begun to implement a comprehensive assessment strategy. Since many of the rubrics and assessment tools still do not exist or are in their infancy, we have not been able to demonstrate to the fullest extent our strengths and weaknesses. We can only say with certainty that we have been “weak” in measuring our objectives as we have not fully implemented assessment instruments/rubrics. Our strength is that we have begun to create the necessary mechanisms to allow for a more meaningful description of our program’s strengths and weaknesses for the future. We would like to reassure the assessment committee that we are making the necessary strides to reach this goal.

Here are the implemented changes that took place this year:

- As suggested, all program goals have been rewritten to be more “student-centered.” That is, the language has been changed to clearly specify what students “will do” in our program (see pages 1-2).
- We appreciate the feedback on last year’s report about establishing new benchmarks that are less holistic. Upon review of our current assessments and the ways in which they were implemented last year, we are unable to establish changes for all of the benchmarks in this report but will do so next year (i.e., benchmarks for 2c are still holistic for this year’s report). For example, for the comprehensive exams, we have established a new benchmark, “students will receive a mean

score of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.” This equates to an 80% acceptance level. With the new benchmarks in place we will be able to fully detect our strengths and weaknesses.

- To some extent, we already have a less holistic system in place for our graduate comprehensive exams. Now we have started to implement the use of rubrics for each section of the comprehensive exams. A rubric for theory, research methods/statistics, law, and planning have been developed and are used by each member of the graduate comprehensive exam committee to assess each student’s answers on the exam. These rubrics are then returned to the graduate director and then to one of the co-assessors in the department. It is this kind of specific feedback that is allowing us to determine where there are weaknesses overall in what our students are learning. The only challenge or impediment here is that sometimes faculty do not use the rubric or return the rubric so that it can be used for these reports.
- As a department we have begun to construct the pre/post graduate survey. This is a very large undertaking and time consuming for 6 full-time faculty. All faculty in the department are contributing questions for this survey and we hope to pilot it no later than next fall. The development of this instrument however, is contingent on our learning objectives, some of which may change in the next year or so.
- For Spring 2011, we will be piloting our pre/post test for graduate students in the advanced theoretical criminology course.
- We are continuing and have not neglected to address the issue that we need more than one way of measuring each objective or that we need varied assessments. As a department, and based on the recommendation of the Director of Academic Assessment, this assessment process has become far more manageable as we have created a timeline (see Table 2). It is our understanding that we need only assess one-fourth of our learning outcomes each year. Given the 13 objectives, 3-4 objectives are assessed each year. With this in place, our energies can be focused on developing meaningful assessments in a more manageable and timely fashion.

**Table 2: Projected Timeline of Assessment Activities**

	1a.	1b.	1c.	1d.	1e.	2a.	2b.	2c.	2d.	2e.	3a.	3b.	3c.
2009-2010	x					x		x					
2010-2011		x	x						x	x			
2011-2012											x	x	x
2012-2013				x	x		x						

\*Due to the odd number of objectives and the classes in which they are typically housed, we are unable to assess exactly one-fourth of objectives every year.

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

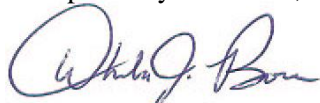
A report was submitted on May 24, 2010 to Mary Beth Reynolds, which detailed the survey data that was obtained on Assessment Day 2010 (see Attachment B, page 12). We see no need to elaborate any further as the report already has been generated.

**Part VI. Assistance Needed with Assessment**

At this point in time, the department is not requesting any immediate assistance from the Office of Assessment. However, as a department we are still facing the challenges of rubric construction as some faculty are not as skilled or are uncertain about their abilities to develop meaningful and authentic assessments. All faculty members do not have backgrounds in assessment. So, it has taken some time to have additional meetings and to educate members of the department about the ways in which assessments can be created and used. What are some ways in which faculty who have no background on assessment

can be educated on how to develop rubrics and assessments? Additionally, which is more important in constructing the benchmarks, the degree of improvement overall from pre- to post- or the measure of quality on the final assessment (i.e., posttest). That is, which is better, demonstrating greater improvement from pre- to post-test, or demonstrating a "passing or better" level of understanding at the end of the course? Determining the appropriate benchmarks continues to be of concern to our faculty.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dhruba J. Bora". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

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 2010**

For the 2009-2010 academic year, one-fourth of the thirteen learning objectives were measured. Specifically, data which measures objectives 1a, 2a, and 2c are described in this report and written in red type.

**Goal 1: Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate advanced 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.

<b>Program's Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Year evaluated</b>	<b>Assessment Measures (Tools)</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Analysis/ Planned Actions</b>
1a. Knowledge of criminological theories.	2009 /10	Comprehensive Exams  CJ602 Final Project & CJ603 Proposal  CJ 604 midterm and final exam scores	80% of students will score a minimum of 3.0/4.0 using the comprehensive exam rubric.  80% of students will correctly identify theory & theorist for projects  80% of students will score above average or higher.	100% of students (n = 10) scored a minimum of 3.0/4.0 on written theory exam and 100% (n=9) scored a minimum of 3.0/4.0 on their oral theory exam.  100% of students in both classes used theory correctly (above average or better)  100% (n = 11) of students scored above average or higher on the midterm exam and 91% scored above average or higher on the final exam.	-Our students perform well on the comprehensive exam with regards to theory. There is only ONE theory question for the exam, so an item analysis is not possible with regards to examining their content knowledge.  -We are in the process of developing a pre/post graduate survey to assess knowledge of theory (by Fall 2011)  -For next spring we have a more comprehensive and less holistic rubric that will be used as opposed to the one used here.

<b>Program's Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Year evaluated</b>	<b>Assessment Measures (Tools)</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Analysis/ Planned Actions</b>
1b. Knowledge of qualitative & quantitative research methods.	To be assessed 2010-2011.	Comprehensive Exams  CJ603 Proposal  CJ 655 midterm and final exam scores			
1c. Knowledge of qualitative & quantitative analytical techniques.	To be assessed 2010-2011.	Comprehensive Exams  CJ603 Proposal  CJ 656 exams and final exam scores			
1d. Knowledge of the adjudication of law.	To be assessed 2012-2013.	Comprehensive Exams  CJ 621 midterm and final exam scores			
1e. Knowledge of planning, program design, and program evaluation.	To be assessed 2012-2013.	Comprehensive Exams  CJ 603 Proposal			

### **Goal 2: Skills**

Students will demonstrate skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, research, and data analysis 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
<p>2a. Demonstrate critical thinking skills by</p> <p>1) evaluating, comparing, and contrasting theories and applying theories to behaviors;</p> <p>2) evaluating, comparing, and contrasting qualitative and quantitative methods, and designing and conducting qualitative and quantitative research;</p> <p>3) evaluating a criminal, delinquent, or social problem, designing a program or policy to resolve it, and designing an evaluation of that program or policy;</p> <p>4) analyzing social, cultural, and political events and a classic piece of criminal justice/criminology literature from a selected time period in U.S. history, explaining the relationships among the events, the literature, and criminal justice practice or criminological theory.</p>	2009 /10	<p>Comprehensive Exams</p> <p>CJ604 Midterm &amp; Final Exam Scores</p> <p>CJ655 Final Project</p> <p>CJ603 Proposal</p> <p>CJ602 Final Project</p>	<p>80% of students score min. mean of 3.0/4.0 (rubric)</p> <p>80% of students will score above average or higher.</p> <p>80% of students will score above avg. or better</p> <p>80% of proposals will be above average, correctly apply theory, select method, and develop design</p> <p>80% of projects will be above average &amp; correctly apply a theory</p>	<p>100% of students (n = 10) scored min. of 3.0 on theory section of the comp. exam.</p> <p>100% (n = 11) of students scored above average or higher on midterm exam; 91% scored above average or higher on final exam.</p> <p>69% (n=13) of students scored above avg. or better on the Final Project</p> <p>100% of proposals were above average or better; 100% correctly applied theory, selected a method, &amp; developed a design.</p> <p>100% of projects were above average or better; 100% correctly applied theory</p>	<p>- students are required to apply a theory; application skills are strong.</p>

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
2b. Demonstrate oral communication skills by developing and delivering oral presentations	To be assessed 2012-2013.	CJ602 Presentations CJ603 Presentations CJ604 Presentations CJ655 Presentations			-A standardized rubric is under development to measure graduate level presentations and to measure this objective.

2c. Demonstrate written communication skills by developing and submitting written products	2009/10	Comprehensive Exams (Theory)	80% of students will score above avg. or higher.	100% (n = 10) of students scored above average or higher on composition & mechanics (theory section of the comprehensive exam).	-No students were deemed weak on this portion of the exam.
		CJ 602 Final Project	80%	100% (n=9) of students scored above average or higher on written products	
		CJ 603 Proposal	80%	100% (n = 9) of students scored above average or higher on written aspects of the proposal	
		CJ604 Midterm & Final	80%	100% (n = 11) of students scored above average or higher on midterm exam; 91% scored above average or higher on final exam.	
		CJ 655 Final Proposal	80%	69% (n = 13) of students scored above average or higher on their research methods project.	-An error in rubrics prevented more comprehensive assessment
		CJ 621 Paper	80%	Not assessed.	- We are still in the process of getting all of our rubrics developed and implemented

Program's Student Learning Outcomes	Year evaluated	Assessment Measures (Tools)	Benchmarks	Results	Analysis/ Planned Actions
<p>2d. Demonstrate advanced research skills by</p> <p>1) finding, critically evaluating, summarizing, and using information from scholarly literature to support an argument or program or policy proposal;</p> <p>2) properly constructing written work in APA format, using APA style;</p> <p>3) critically evaluating, comparing, and contrasting various types of qualitative and quantitative research methods and selecting appropriate methods for various problems.</p>	To be assessed 2010-2011.	<p>CJ655 Research Assignment</p> <p>CJ621 Research Assignment</p> <p>CJ602 Final Project</p> <p>CJ603 Proposal</p> <p>CJ604 Midterm &amp; Final Exam</p>			
<p>2e. Critically evaluate, compare, and contrast various types of qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, select the most appropriate technique(s) to analyze data, use statistics software (SPSS) whenever applicable, interpret and apply the data to the problem, and identify and explain implications of findings.</p>	To be assessed 2010-2011.	<p>CJ656 SPSS Assignments</p> <p>Graduate Pre/Post Survey (in development)</p>			

**Goal 3: Attitudes**

Students will demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of human, social, and cultural diversity on the criminal justice system, to the complexity of the relationships among social problems, human interactions, and the criminal justice system, and to the ethical dilemmas sometimes arise within these relationships.

<b>Program's Student Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Year evaluated</b>	<b>Assessment Measures (Tools)</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Analysis/ Planned Actions</b>
3a. Identify, describe, and explain various human, social, and cultural diversities, and how these diversities impact the criminal justice system and the processing of individuals through the criminal justice system.	To be assessed 2011-2012.	Attitude survey (pre-/post-program)  CJ602 Final Project			-The graduate pre/post test is under development and will be ready by Fall 2011. Discussions about the use of varied assessments to measure this outcome are also taking place.
3b. Identify, describe, and explain complex relationships among social problems, human interactions, and the criminal justice system.	To be assessed 2011-2012.	Attitude survey (pre-/post-program)  CJ602 Final Project  CJ603 Final Project			-The graduate pre/post test is under development and will be ready by Fall 2011. Discussions about the use of varied assessments to measure this outcome are also taking place.
3c. Recognize, explain, and propose solutions to ethical issues in criminal justice research & practice.	To be assessed 2011-2012	Attitude survey (pre-/post-program)  CJ 604 Assessment  CJ 655-applicable items from the midterm exam			-The graduate pre/post test is under development and will be ready by Fall 2011. Discussions about the use of varied assessments to measure this outcome are also taking place.

## Attachment B

### Criminal Justice Graduate Program (M.S.) 2010 Assessment Day Report

Submitted by: Kim DeTardo-Bora

Results of the Assessment Day graduate exit survey about the Criminal Justice Program at Marshall University were overwhelmingly positive. The data are presented below as they are linked to our program goals and objectives. Specifically, each table includes the average score of student responses on a 5-point Likert scale as well as the percentage of students who strongly agreed or agreed to the survey items. A brief narrative about these results follows.

#### **Goal 1: Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate advanced 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:

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>% Strongly Agree and Agree</b>	<b>N</b>
1a. ...develop advanced knowledge of criminological theories.	1.29	86%	7
1b. ...develop advanced knowledge of research methods.	1.43	86%	7
1c. ...develop advanced knowledge of statistical analysis.	1.71	86%	7
1d. ...develop advanced knowledge of the adjudication of law.	1.29	100%	7
1e. ...develop advanced knowledge of planning, program design, and program evaluation.	3.14	14%	7

**Goal 2: Skills**

Students in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology will demonstrate skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, research, and data analysis necessary for future employment and/or post-graduate studies in the criminal justice sciences:

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>% Strongly Agree and Agree</b>	<b>N</b>
2a. ...enhance their critical thinking skills related to criminal justice theory and practice.	1.0	100%	7
2b. ...enhance their oral communication skills.	1.14	100%	7
2c. ...enhance their written communication skills.	1.0	86%	7
2d. ...enhance their research skills by evaluating scholarly literature via the library database and internet database searches.	1.14	100%	7
2e. ...develop or enhance their skills in the use of statistics software and the interpretation and application of data.	1.43	86%	7

### Goal 3: Attitudes

Students will demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of human, social, and cultural diversity on the criminal justice system, to the complexity of the relationships among social problems, human interactions, and the criminal justice system, and to the ethical dilemmas sometimes arise within these relationships:

Objectives	Mean	% Strongly Agree and Agree	N
3a. ...develop or enhance their awareness and of and sensitivity to human, social, and cultural diversity.	1.43	100%	7
3b. ...develop or enhance their awareness of sensitivity to the complex nature of social problems that relate to crime and to the practice of criminal justice and criminology.	1.14	100%	7
3c. ...examine, evaluate, and apply ethical principles of the discipline in regard to research, use of sources, collaboration with colleagues, and principled decision/policy making.	1.57	86%	7

In sum, students in the graduate program “strongly agreed or agreed” to have acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that our program strives to provide them. In addition and not provided in the tables above, 100% of the student respondents strongly agreed or agreed that criminal justice faculty were available during office hours, that graduate advising was to their satisfaction, and that courses were offered at reasonable times. Plus, 100% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend our program to others even though it was challenging to them.

Nonetheless, there were a couple issues raised that warrant further discussion and/or change over the next academic year. That is, students were more likely to “neither agree nor disagree” that they “developed advanced knowledge of planning, program design, and program evaluation.” In addition, data from this survey indicated that 3 out of 7 students (43%) remarked that CJ 603 (the planning course) should be omitted from the curriculum. This is a course that is generally not preferred by students as they do not understand how the practical application of grant writing and program evaluation fits with an advanced career in criminal justice. Given the informal discussions at faculty meetings about this class, some revisions will be made to the class beginning Fall 2011. For example, the class will still retain some elements of grant writing and program evaluation, but it will include a management component that may be better suited to the interests of our students.

Another area that is to be addressed was how students responded to being prepared for the graduate comprehensive exams. Forty-three percent of students neither agreed nor disagreed that they were adequately prepared for the exams and 29% responded that they agreed. This is not a major negative aspect of the program; however, current plans are underway to create a graduate comprehensive exam guide, one that is standardized, so that students are fully informed of the process by the graduate director.