

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo Criminal Justice

The 2013-2014 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Criminal Justice concluded with a culmination meeting on May 8, 2015.

During the meeting, the program was commended for the significant progress made in the past several years, which includes:

1. The range of electives course offered as special topics classes is impressive.
2. A significant strength of the elective curriculum is the availability of a broad range of experiential learning opportunities, including internships, service learning courses, independent studies, and applied policy research opportunities.
 - While the program has taken a proactive approach to create courses to engage students in research or to incorporate student research in grants, the faculty acknowledged that it is challenging to identify students who are motivated to do research.
3. Integration of multiple options for studying criminal justice policy, leadership, public management, and justice administration is a programmatic strength.

The major recommendations and concerns raised through the PPR process were discussed. Suggestions on how to address them were provided:

1. Declare the criminal justice program impacted.
 - The external reviewers suggested impaction as an option for the program to consider, but the program is concerned about how impaction will affect issues such as hiring, FTES, number of majors, etc. The program would like to have more information on this issue before making a decision.
 - The Deputy Provost suggested the program to monitor how students are moving through the curriculum, and explore the possibility of “weeding out” students who are not a “good fit” early on.
 - The college recommended the program to carefully consider what to recommend to incoming students in terms of how to be better prepared for the major, and what courses they should take in the first year. The program should also consider incorporating co-curricular pieces to engage students early on. The program agreed that it is a challenge to help incoming students set appropriate expectations and/or perception of the degree.
2. Develop roadmaps that guide students to degree completion in four, five, or six years.
 - The program has developed roadmaps for different student populations: full-time, part-time, 4yr graduation, 5yr graduation, and 6yr graduation.
 - The Deputy Provost asked whether the courses are scheduled strategically to allow students take them easily, and hence follow the roadmap without scheduling obstacles. The program’s response is positive, confirming well-coordinated and diverse options of courses.
 - o The division chair voiced, however, that classroom space is a challenge for the program, which limits course availability. The program is currently exploring weekend class options to address this issue.

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- When asked about online course options, the program reported that while there is currently one online course, faculty are not interested in developing the program into a fully online program.
3. Add prerequisites to 400-level courses.
 - With the roadmaps developed, the prerequisite courses are now included on the course registration forms – students are advised to take 300 level courses before 400 level ones.
 - The program has not officially required students to complete “core courses” before taking electives, due to concerns of time to graduation and academic performance.
 - The college recommended the program to study the students who are in the 400 level courses, which would help the advisors appropriately steer students into 300 level or 400 level courses.
 4. Fix curriculum deficiencies: add statistics course, create applied criminal justice ethics course, and require courts and criminal procedures electives as core curriculum.
 - The program currently has 340, which is a course combining research methods and statistics. The faculty are concerned that separating out methods and statistics may create a barrier for students who do not have a strong math background. The program acknowledges the importance of the methods course, as it is required before students engage in research. However, there are limited faculty who are qualified to teach it. Research method is an important focus in new faculty hires.
 - The college recommended the program to explore the Math 120 (Introduction to Statistics) as a possibility for students to take to fulfill statistics requirement.
 - The Deputy Provost brought up the external reviewers’ comment that the program needs to modernize the curriculum and keep it current. The faculty believe that this is a bias of the reviewers, and is not the direction desired by the faculty. The program, however, will explore collaboration opportunities across campus (e.g. biology, chemistry, psychology, GIS, etc.).
 5. Revisit the ways in which academic advising is delivered to shift some of the responsibilities from faculty to professional or graduate student advisors.
 - Currently, program faculty receive release time for advising, and graduate students serve as the “first line” of advising. The program has also developed advising videos posted on its website, addressing issues such as general curriculum, course maps, and the order in which courses should be taken.
 - The division chair suggested that the student profile in criminal justice is different than the other students in the division, which requires more mentoring. The college also noted the issue of higher probation rate and lower GPA for these students. It is recommended that the program should consider having a dedicated person to deal with probationary issues, and actively identify at-risk students using the dashboard. The program is commended by the college for being proactive in student success initiative, with the hope that effective strategies will be identified that would apply both within and outside the program.

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- The Deputy Provost also suggested the program to consider having designated lecturer or staff as advisors, but cautioned that any lecturers the program hires need to be well qualified to teach (i.e. not limited to the capacity of advisors).
6. Create a program-based assessment plan that gathers direct and indirect evidence and uses it to reshape curriculum and teaching practices.
 - The program acknowledged the need to strengthen its assessment plan. The division chair indicated that the program is now in its second year of assessment, assessing two SLOs per semester.
 - The program has also just completed its alumni survey, which collected useful data for program improvement.
 7. Utilize department resources to encourage faculty scholarship and research, and reward service.
 - The Deputy Provost commended the program for actively pursuing research grants, through participating in DC trips to seek external funding.
 - The faculty reported that the level of institutional support on research activities has not increased over the past few years. In particular, the faculty reported challenging working relationship with the Office of Research. The college echoed this issue, stating that the grant submission experiences have been problematic. The college is currently exploring the possibility of having a dedicated person in the college to assist faculty with this process.
 8. Carefully match part-time faculty to course assignments, and carefully monitor the teaching effectiveness of adjunct instructors.
 - The division chair reported that matching was a bigger problem 4-6 years ago, but changes have been made in the last few years to improve the problem.
 - The program also reported that it is monitoring the part-time faculty more effectively now, with the help of the part-time faculty review process.
 9. Hire two tenure-track faculty members.
 - The program hired one faculty member this year, using a line that was unused previously.
 - The college will inform the chairs soon of its plan on faculty hiring. The college is also working to encourage collaboration between departments, e.g. cross-listing of courses, faculty teaching in another department, interdisciplinary research, and cross-discipline supervision of graduate students.
 - The program reported significant challenges in recruiting new faculty – limited pool of candidates; candidates in high demand nationwide; and candidates’ desire for a master’s program.
 - The program is encouraged to explore the master’s program option. The program intends to submit the proposal by the end of June to the college, with the plan of starting the first master’s cohort in Fall 2018.