

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Program Performance Review
Department of Criminal Justice
B.A. and Minor

Dean's Summary Report and Recommendations

April 29, 2014

In the last Program Performance Review (2005/06), in addition to celebrating the many strengths and accomplishments of the department of Criminal Justice, the program's self-study, the reports of the external reviewers, and the recommendations of the Dean of H&SS noted several problems facing the department. These included the low ratio of tenure-track faculty, the difficulties created by the Correlated Curriculum requirement in their major, the need for more courses that develop student's writing and research skills, and the need to create a systematic plan for program-level assessment. The department, the reviewers, and the Dean suggested goals for improvement: hire more more tenure-track faculty, reshape or eliminate the Correlated Curriculum requirement, extend the learning of writing and research skills throughout their curriculum and create a research and writing course for the major, enhance the quality and quantity of student advisement, and develop a program-level assessment plan based on direct as well as indirect and embedded forms of evidence.

It is clear that since the last review the department has, in large part, realized three of these goals: they have hired more tenure-track faculty; they have eliminated the Correlated Curriculum requirement; and more faculty members have offered sections of CRJU 340 – Criminal Justice Research Methods. In addition they have added two writing courses from the English department (ENGL 301 and 365) that count toward their department's writing requirement. According to the Department's current self-study, the report of a new group of external reviewers, and the department's response to the reviewers report, however, some problems still remain.

On January 28, 2014, after reading the department's self-study a team of external reviewers, which included Cheryl Maxson (Professor of Criminology, Law, and Society at the University of California, Irvine), Hank Fradella (Professor of Law, Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Forensic Studies and Director, School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management), and Jochen Burgtorf (Professor and Chair, Department of History, California State University, Fullerton) visited the CSUF campus and met with a variety of members of the Criminal Studies department, including faculty, staff and students. The reviewers' recommendations, the department's responses to the reviewers report and plans for the future, and my recommendations are outlined below.

I. FACULTY

NEW HIRES

External Reviewers

While the department of CRJU has hired more tenure-track faculty, the external reviewers argue for the need to hire even more tenure-track faculty in order to deal with increases in service and teaching workloads that are the result of the increase in the number of CRJU majors. Specifically, the reviewers encourage them to hire faculty who

would expand their curriculum in the areas such as policing, victimology, comparative criminology, and research methods; faculty who could train students in new technologies that would enhance their professional skills, such as “the bio-psychological aspects of criminology, GIS crime mapping, and Social Network Analysis.

Department

The department agreed that they new need to recruit faculty to teach courses in policing, victimology, comparative criminology, and research methods, and they propose to hire two tenure-track faculty and two full-time lecturers to teach in these areas.

Dean

There is some dispute as to the home department of one faculty member who joined them from another department on campus. While CRJU refers to this faculty member as a *Division* hire, by the University’s count the individual is a program hire. With 11.5 tenure-track faculty and an FTEF of 16, their current ratio of tenure-track faculty is 72%. One hire would bring them to 79%, while two hires would bring them to 84%. It should be noted that the department is currently conducting a search for two visiting professors for AY 14/15.

For the period under review, they have met or surpassed target since AY 2005/06, except for the current year, in which they were just a bit short. While it is uncertain if their FTEF will be augmented in the near future, it appears that two tenure-track hires would be supported at this time.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

External Reviewers

The reviewers noted that all faculty do not seem to have active research agendas. In order to encourage those who do not and to reward those who do, they suggested providing active scholars assigned time to pursue their research. In addition, professional development funds to supplement research costs and to aid faculty as they prepare applications for external grants, should be forthcoming. As an added incentive, the reviewers suggest increasing the minimum publications standards for retention, tenure and promotion, claiming that current standards are too low.

Department

The department agrees that additional support from the University for research is required, arguing that it is difficult to maintain an active research agenda with high teaching loads and service assignments.

Dean

The vast majority of CRJU faculty are actively pursuing research agendas, resulting in the publication of peer-reviewed monographs, journal articles, and book chapters. They have presented papers at an array of invited lectures and at regional and national

conferences. Many of their faculty have received prestigious awards recognizing the high quality of their teaching, scholarship and community service and are actively pursuing grant opportunities to fund their research projects. Finally, they are actively involved in important professional organizations. The difficulty of conducting research with our teaching load and providing adequate levels of funding for research is a difficult balancing act. It should be noted, though, that the department of Criminal Justice currently teaches a 3/3 load. Research money allocated to the department for travel and other forms of professional development should be awarded to faculty who continue to be productive. Moreover, the department should make every effort to ensure that teaching loads are equally distributed among its faculty.

SERVICE

External Reviewers

The reviewers argued that service workloads are unevenly distributed among faculty. To remedy this a system of rewards should be put into place, providing those who take on these responsibilities with increased access to assigned time and travel money for professional development.

Department

The department agrees with this assessment.

Dean

Faculty record of service within the department is uneven. Faculty resources for professional development and release-time allocations are scarce, but the department should consider carefully allocating them to reward those who actively participate in service to students, the department, and the University.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

External Reviewers

The reviewers note that the use of working professionals with “real world” experience is beneficial to the program, but they warn of assigning faculty who are not academically qualified to teach courses in criminological theory and research methods. They urge the department to carefully match course assignments with faculty education and expertise.

Department

The department agrees that it needs to be careful to set basic standards of qualification for part-time faculty in order to properly match adjunct faculty with course assignments.

Dean

The department of CRJU should continue to carefully monitor the match between faculty expertise and course assignments.

II. STUDENT SUCCESS

CURRICULUM

External Reviewers

The reviewers commend the department for offering an impressive array of electives, internships and special topics, service learning, and applied policy research courses, noting the benefits they receive from their inclusion in the division of Politics, Administration and Criminal Justice. They also commented on the range of department electives that provide a “depth and breadth of coursework” in areas such as criminal justice policy, public management, and justice administration, which gives the “criminal justice major at CSUF a distinctive niche among other criminal justice programs in the region (especially in comparison to other CSUs).”

They also note, however, that their curriculum is “not as current as it should be,” arguing that it does not “meet the curricular standards set forth by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.” They recommend the addition of courses on the courts, criminal procedure, ethics, and statistics to their core curriculum, arguing that this could be accomplished by reclassifying existing electives as required core courses in the first two categories (e.g., CRJU 472 – The Judicial Process and CRJU 310B – Criminal Law-Procedural), and the addition of courses on ethics and statistics to their core or elective requirements.

Equally problematic, the reviewers noted that Criminal Justice is a flat major in that there is only one prerequisite for all of their courses—CRJU 300, and they recommend creating a vertical, integrated structure that builds on previously gained knowledge by creating more prerequisites and layering the major. This, they argue, will better prepare students to succeed in upper-level courses and will shorten time to degree by making student better prepared to succeed in their upper-division courses. This would also be a way of getting students to leave the major early on if they cannot successfully complete milestone or benchmark courses in the major.

Department

The department agrees with the reviewers’ suggestions for new courses, but insists that adding courses on the courts, criminal procedure, ethics and statistics to their core requirements would be difficult to do with existing resources and would require hiring additional full-time faculty. Moreover, the department also mentioned that efforts to add new courses to their curriculum have been met with resistance by the H&SS Curriculum Committee, specifically noting that the department of Philosophy has blocked their efforts to add an ethics course to their major. With regard to a statistics course, they argue that while this would be helpful for those going on to graduate school, few of their majors continue on to do graduate work in areas that require this. For these few,

however, they propose revising their curriculum by encouraging those who plan to go on to graduate programs that require this background to take Sociology 303 – Statistics for the Social Sciences.

In response to the reviewers call for more lower-division courses that could serve as pre-requisites to major, the department agrees that this is a good idea, but they insist it would be hard to deliver because of the difficulty of getting such courses through the H&SS Curriculum Committee. As a department, though, they will look into creating more pre-requisites for the major. They also recognize the need to add new, cutting edge courses to their curriculum, but they mention that this will be difficult to do without hiring additional faculty.

Dean

The department has made some changes in its curriculum since their last PPR. They eliminated CRJU 350 – Writing for Criminal Justice, and substituted ENGL 301 – Advanced College Writing or ENGL 365 – Legal Writing, and added more sections of CRJU 340 – Criminal Justice Research Methodology. They also eliminated the Correlated Curriculum requirement because it was not serving its intended purpose—expanding student knowledge in areas relevant to their academic and professional interests.

In order to accommodate the number of majors they serve and provide up-to-date instruction to better prepare their graduates for the professions they will enter, the department wants to hire more tenure-track faculty in the following areas: policing, global criminology, research methods, public law and victomology. They can also expand their curriculum by encouraging faculty to expand their teaching areas and interests. They should also not be deterred from creating new courses because of past challenges from other departments or from the College Curriculum Committee. Finally, in response to their concern about curricular limitations, they should also rethink the ways that courses outside of the major could be integrated into the major as core or elective requirements. While the Correlated Curriculum requirement did not seem to serve its purpose, perhaps its goal—to expand course offerings to majors in line with academic and professional interests—could be achieved in other ways. I would encourage the department to explore ways of carefully allowing students, closely guided by CRJU advisors, to select courses in other disciplines that would help them to augment educational and professional opportunities for students and allow them to realize one of the self-defined characteristics of their department, the “interdisciplinary nature” of their field.

ADVISEMENT

External Reviewers

The number of CRJU majors admitted and enrolled has increased during the period between 2005/06 and 2012/13 for first-time freshmen and upper-division transfer students.

Currently, faculty members each receive one course off per semester for advising. While one of the advisors deals exclusively with pre-law students, the remaining four are responsible for advising the bulk of CRJU majors. With 1204 majors, the faculty advisors complain that the workload exceeds the 3 WTU's of assigned time compensation.

Rather than provide more assigned time for this, the reviewers argue that this is a substantial waste of faculty time and instead urge the department to hire full-time professional staff advisors with a minimum of a BA degree to guide students through the bureaucratic procedures—course selection, graduation requirements and deadlines, and grad checks—so that faculty can spend their time as mentors providing high-level advisement on academic issues and professional careers.

The reviewers also asked them to create distinctive roadmaps to graduation.

Finally, the reviewers urge the department to declare impaction, which would raise the minimum GPA and test scores for admission to the program. This, combined with more prerequisites and benchmark classes, they argue, would increase graduation and retention rates.

Department

In response, the department agrees that the use grad students or professional staff advisors would be worthwhile. They also propose creating large group-based orientations to the major and an online video that would include much of the general information for the major.

The department, for now, rejects the idea of declaring impaction. They insist that, based on past experiences, this created more problems than it created.

Dean

It does appear that the use of faculty release-time to provide advice on graduation requirements, deadlines, and grad checks is a waste of scarce faculty resources. The department should consider implementing the large group-based and online video orientations to the major they suggest. They should also consider using course release time saved to fund a professional staff advisement position or several graduate assistants that could handle these issues so that faculty could spend their time as mentors providing high-level advisement on academic issues and professional careers.

I also recommend that the department consider creating more pre-requisites for their courses, and encourage them to provide a more scaled sequencing structure to the major, which would allow students to build on knowledge previously attained as they moved forward through their major requirements. I also recommend the creation of clear roadmaps to graduation that guide not only student advisement but also course scheduling.

GRADUATIONS RATES AND RETENTION

The number of CRJU degrees awarded has steadily increased from 254 in 2005/06 to 304 in 2012/13,

The University average for first-time freshmen graduating in 6 years or less “in major” grew during the period between fall 2000 (21.5%) and **fall 2006 (24.0%)**. The average for the College of H&SS declined slightly during the same period (fall 2000 – 27.6% and **fall 2006 – 27.2%**). The average for CRJU went down, from 31.9% in fall 2000 to **26.8% in fall 2006**. While the decline is significant, for the most part the department’s graduation rate has exceeded that of the College and the University.

The University average for transfer students graduating in 6 years or less “in major” declined slightly during the period between fall 2000 (63.1%) and **fall 2006 (62.5%)**. The average for the College of H&SS also declined slightly during the same period (fall 2000 – 61.8% and **fall 2006 – 60.7%**). The average for CRJU increased during this period (65.3% in fall 2000 to 70% in fall 2006), and they have substantially exceeded the graduation rates of the College and the University.

While CRJU is essentially an upper-division major, and their students take the vast majority of their courses in their junior and senior years, in order to improve retention rates the department should consider forms of outreach to lower-division majors (especially FTF), providing them with enhanced advisement and integrating them into the social networks of the major.

In addition, they should continue to create opportunities for “high impact” student experiences, such as the DC Internship Program, the National Criminal Justice Honor Society, student research projects sponsored through Independent Studies classes, student involvement in faculty research and publications and independent conference presentations, the creation of a specialized course on applied policy research (CRJU 475T), internships and service-learning courses.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

External Reviewers

The overall mean rating of the department’s SOQ’s is 3.34 on a 4.0 scale, indicating to the reviewers that student’s “generally perceive the quality of instruction in the criminal justice program to be quite high.” Drawing on the “limited assessment data” provided them, however, the reviewers came to the following conclusions: (1) students are learning valuable information and skills from faculty, but that (2) the department needs to make changes in the way CRJU 300 (Introduction to Criminal Justice) is taught, since students have only mastered “about half of the material they are expected to learn in

that course.” More to the point, the reviewers also concluded that the department has “not engaged in an appropriate program of assessment of student learning outcomes.” They also note that the university should provide further assistance to help them do this, such as assigned time and instruction on program assessment.

Department

The department of CRJU has engaged in some forms of assessment. As they note in their self-study, they used a “pre-post test” method of gauge student learning in four CRJU 300-level classes, comparing how students performed on a test at the beginning of the semester and at its end. They have also engaged in indirect forms of assessment—such as focus groups (2 groups of 5 students each); the mean average scores of faculty SOQ’s; a survey sent to “local stakeholders” (primarily law enforcement organizations), asking them to identify the traits they expect from their graduates; an examination of the “best” paper from each class submitted to a CRJU student paper contest; and the H&SS survey alums, which describes post-graduate employment, income, education, and life satisfaction—which provided them with some ideas on how to reshape their curriculum.

With regard to the future, the department plans on creating and using another form of indirect assessment, an exit interview, and they pledge to work on revamping their assessment process.

Dean

The department did not, however, provide concrete plans for improving their assessment plan. In addition, they did not include and complete Appendix III, the Documentation of Academic Achievement grid, which would outline the achievements and goals of their assessment plan. The department needs to construct a more comprehensive assessment plan that would expand the evidence collected from direct as well as indirect forms of assessment. They also need to create a plan that is program based, and that clearly demonstrates how information gathered has and will be used to improve their curriculum as well as their teaching and advisement practices. It is not clear from the department’s self-study how their current assessment activities have been used to reshape their curriculum or their teaching practices. I recommend that they work closely with Su Swarat, Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness, as well as the H&SS Assessment Committee, for help in creating and implementing a program-based assessment plan.

IV. BUDGETS AND TARGETS

External Reviewers

The reviewers made few specific recommendations with regard to budgets and targets, except to note that the department’s SFR is too high, its FTEF allocation is too low, and

there is insufficient support for faculty research. They also question why low-enrolled courses are offered at the Irvine campus, and note these offerings divert scarce resources away from the main campus, where course enrollments would be much higher. This, they argue, interferes with the timely graduation rates of their majors.

Department

The department agrees with all three points.

Dean

CRJU's SFR has indeed risen in the past few years, growing from 27.6 in 2005/6 to 28.1 2013/14. But the SFR's of almost all H&SS departments and programs have also increased this period. Their current FTEF allocation of 16.0 is based on their FTES target (447) divided by their SFR (28.1), and is not likely to rise in the near future.

V. FACILITIES

CLASSROOMS

External Reviewers

The reviewers note that CRJU does not have sufficient dedicated classroom space to meet their target enrollment.

Department

The department agrees with this assessment, and asks that they be assigned more large classrooms, which should be taken from those departments that underuse them.

Dean

Unfortunately, most departments and programs in the College face this predicament. Even though most of their classes are eventually housed in available room "owned" by other departments or Colleges (classrooms assigned to other departments and Colleges, if unused, are reassigned to unhoused classes and thus are never unused), the complaint is that too much staff time is wasted securing these rooms.

The remedy is not at hand, since the classes assigned to H&SS departments are, for the most part, well utilized. As for the time spent securing unassigned classrooms, classes without rooms are listed on schedules that are turned in to the H&SS Dean's office and eventually to the Scheduling Office. Both of these offices, for the most part, find classrooms for these unhoused courses. The only work required of department staff is when unhoused classes are not given classrooms, and they subsequently have to check with Scheduling for unexpected openings in the semester's schedule.

In fact, since several large-classrooms were mistakenly allocated to PAJ and removed from their list of rooms, the Dean's office offered PAJ first choice of the available large

rooms that had mistakenly not been assigned to departments, and they did not express any interest in them.

VI. STAFF

External Reviewers

The reviewers mention that PAJ is understaffed, and that one of their full-time employees is chronically absent and, when present, often underperforms.

Department

The department concurs that division staff are overworked, and that necessary work is not being completed in a timely way or at all. They request additional support staff.

Dean

The current staffing formula for CRJU is 3.5 Their ASA I, who is in a half-time (.5) position, has announced her retirement. We recommend augmenting PAJ to a staffing level of 4.0, which will allow them to hire a full-time staff member. We are currently working with the division of PAJ to create a job description for the new position.

VII. DEAN'S SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the period under review the department of Criminal Justice has demonstrated the many ways it has contributed to the mission of the University. The scholarly and professional accomplishments of its faculty as well as their service to our students and the community are substantial and appreciated. In order to build on these efforts and ensure their continuation into the future I would like to make the following recommendations. The department should:

- continue to hire in targeted areas outlined by the external reviewers in order to enhance the strengths of the major and provide for professional development of their students and career preparation;
- utilize department resources (assigned time and professional development funds) to encourage faculty scholarship and research and reward service;
- carefully match part-time faculty to course assignments, and carefully monitor the teaching effectiveness of their adjunct instructors;
- reshape their curriculum by: adding new courses; allowing students to take targeted courses in other departments; develop more course prerequisites; and

create a horizontal structure to the major by creating milestone or benchmark courses that represent a beginning, a middle and an end to the sequence of courses required for the major;

- rethink the way advisement is delivered to their majors, shifting some of the responsibilities from faculty to professional or graduate student advisors, and make further use of online or group advisement experiences;
- improve on the graduation rates of their first-time freshmen through mandatory enhanced advisement and by integrating them into the social networks of the major;
- create a program-based assessment plan that gathers direct as well as indirect evidence and uses it to reshape their curriculum and their teaching practices;
- convert their half-time staff position into a full-time position.