

## **Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo Criminal Justice BA**

The 2021-22 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for the Criminal Justice BA program in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) concluded with a culmination meeting on October 13, 2022.

The following people attended the meeting: Carolyn Thomas (Provost), Ed Fink (AVP for Undergraduate Academic Programs, AVPUAP), Sheryl Fontaine (Dean, HSS), Jessica Stern (Associate Dean, HSS), Matt Jarvis (Department Chair), Phillip Kopp (Vice Chair), Alissa Ackerman (CJ Department Coordinator), Chris Brown (Faculty), Dixie Koo (Faculty), Christine Gardiner (Faculty), Veronica Herrera (Faculty), Moe Miller (Faculty), Jarret Lovell (Faculty), Stacy Mallicoat (Faculty, Honors Program Director), Georgia Spiropoulos (Faculty), and Su Swarat (Senior AVP for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, SAVPIEP).

The Provost congratulated the program for successfully completing the PPR process. The Provost commended the program for being “a program in demand”, which clearly speaks to the positive impact the program has on the students. The following specific accomplishments were highlighted during the PPR process:

- The program is one of the largest undergraduate programs in HSS, serving over 1,300 students. Criminal Justice is a well-respected and popular major among students.
- The department successfully hired 4 full-time, tenure-track faculty since the last review in 2013, all of whom have received tenure and promotion, though one of whom has already left. The Provost pointed out that this reflects the department is at “an inflection point” regarding its administrative position within the college (discussed further in the recommendations section below).
- Faculty have increased the value of the degree by offering students various HIP opportunities (e.g., Study Abroad programs, service-learning experiences, internships, student/faculty research opportunities), producing work that have been published or presented, and serving in leadership roles.
- The program’s advising and peer mentoring initiatives have contributed to the increase in graduate rates for both first-time freshmen and transfer students.
- The Criminal Justice program coordinator is doing extensive and exceptional work in supporting administrative work and engaging with faculty of color.

Major recommendations and issues raised through the accreditation process were discussed as follows:

1. Department strategic planning:
  - The external reviewers recommended the department to develop a clear mission and vision that would guide the program learning outcome development, the curriculum alignment, a student support plan, and a faculty hiring and retention plan.
  - The AVPUAP echoed this recommendation, and stated that the strategic plan can also help address issues such as tensions around racial and gender equity, and equitable workload.
  - The faculty reported that with the support from the Dean’s Office, a strategic planning facilitator was hired, and is working with a “design team” consisted of 3 faculty members

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to map out the process before bringing in the entire faculty. The “design team” faculty commented that they are working on a “culture of compromise” that is much needed for the department.

- The Provost commended this progress, but cautioned the department that faculty engagement is critical to the success of this process.

### **2. Faculty hiring needs:**

- One consensus revealed through the PPR process is that given the size of the Criminal Justice major, there is a need to hire quality tenure-track faculty who can contribute to more diverse course offerings, and with whom students can identify and feel supported.
- The Chair stated that there is much need to focus on tenure-track faculty hire, because there are few PhD programs in the discipline, which means the pool of academically qualified adjuncts is very limited.
- The faculty reported that part-time adjunct faculty often are unable to provide research-grounded instruction that students receive from tenured/tenure-track faculty. Some of the adjunct faculty offer low-quality instruction, which does disservice to the students. For this reason, some courses (e.g. introductory major courses) cannot be taught by adjunct faculty, which in turn prevents tenured/tenure-track faculty from teaching courses in their areas of specialty. Reliance on adjunct faculty is also a source of ongoing tension regarding the program’s desire to acknowledge institutional racism in the justice system and for its mission to be more social justice oriented.
- The faculty also raised that the lack of qualified faculty also impedes the department from developing a master’s program or developing programs to support student success (e.g. the law enforcement scholars program). They expressed the concern that these developments would take tenured/tenure-track faculty away from offering quality courses in the undergraduate program (since these courses could not be backfilled).
- The faculty voiced strong need for more resources to support faculty hiring (and in turn diverse and sufficient course offerings to meet student needs). The lack of a graduate program and the inability to be competitive with geographically adjacent universities makes the program less attractive to potential faculty candidates.

### **3. Faculty retention challenges:**

- The faculty voiced that faculty retention is an issue. The department has lost a faculty of color, and the heavy demand on faculty makes it difficult to retain them. All agreed that faculty retention remains an area of focus at the department, division, college, and university level.
- The faculty also stated that the department needs more faculty of color. Cultural taxation is very heavy on the few faculty of color. Their experiences need to be acknowledged and supported.
- The Provost acknowledged that the faculty’s voices were heard, and their hard work is valued. She recommended the faculty and department sustainability to be a priority for the Dean’s Office.

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4. Possibility of becoming an independent department:
  - The external reviewers stated that it would benefit the program to reconsider its administrative position within the college given the size of the program in conjunction with its growth potential, possibly toward an independent and self-contained department.
  - The Dean reported that this possibility has been raised in prior conversations within the division. The Dean and the Associate Dean have met with faculty in the department, faculty in the division, part-time faculty, and staff to gather information and feedback. No decisions have been made yet.
  - The faculty stated that they are willing to explore the possibility of becoming an independent department, but there needs to be adequate resources to make the move feasible. They would like to continue this conversation to work toward a more sustainable scenario of resource allocation. Until then, the CJ faculty have yet to form a firm position.
  - The Provost recommended the department and the college to review the college budgeting models in partnership with the VP for Administration and Finance. She also pointed out that one way the university is providing more resources to the departments is through updating the academic advising model, which would allow for more staffing support for advising, and thus reducing demand on faculty.

The Dean thanked the department faculty for attending the culmination meeting, which is an indication of care from the faculty to the department. She appreciated the faculty's honesty, and expressed commitment to continued conversation with the faculty on graduate program development, strategic planning, and faculty recruitment and retention.

The Provost concluded the meeting by thanking the faculty for their dedication and hard work. She commended the program for taking on the strategic planning process, and recommended the program to take effort and care in considering the department's future. She committed that the department's effort and care will be match by the effort and care provided by the Provost's Office and the Dean's Office.