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Review of Major Field Assessment Results  
B.A. Criminal Justice  
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice

A review of the results of assessment activities for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice indicates areas which are strong and areas which need improvement. The faculty have discussed the progress of B.A. students in Criminal Justice, have reviewed the curriculum and have studied the exit survey information. Criminal Justice graduating seniors do not have a standardized Major Field Assessment Test.

**Level of knowledge of core curriculum.** Fifteen hours of criminal justice courses 101, 201, 202, 204 and 205 make up the core curriculum. The strength of these courses is in the breadth of fundamental concepts and applications to the field of criminal justice. The assessment is curriculum-embedded in all of the 200-level courses require demonstrated competency in library research and oral communication. The students' major GPA averages above 2.0, indicating most complete these courses with a grade of C or better. Students also take twenty-one hours of criminal justice electives which give a more in-depth treatment to areas covered in the core curriculum. In assessing the level of knowledge and to make improvements, two years ago faculty suggested that students complete all core courses before taking 300 or 400 level criminal justice. This has been implemented successfully. Students in the upper level courses now have a much stronger foundation on which to build. Also, faculty proposed making SOC 234, our social statistics course, a prerequisite of our research methods course. This has been implemented as well, and has resulted in students being much better prepared for 400-level criminal justice courses.

**Satisfaction with curriculum.** Our curriculum at the bachelors level continues to be strong. To assess satisfaction with the program and the curriculum students are asked questions on the exit survey. Nearly 75% of the students ranked the effectiveness of beginning courses in preparation for advance courses at the level four or five, with five being very satisfied. When asked about the quality of the instruction in advanced courses, 79% responded at level four or five. About 72% responded at levels four and five when asked about the quality of the degree program. These results lend support to the strength of the program but also indicate improvement is needed. To do so we have recently improved the internship program and have offered more upper level electives on a rotating basis. The faculty have also identified the areas of deviance and the sociology of gender as needed in the curriculum and are currently developing courses.

**Basic skills needed in the criminal justice field.** The core curriculum provides the foundation of the basic concepts of modern criminal justice. This includes introductions to the judicial process, criminal law, law enforcement, and corrections. In assessing our students, we agree that they receive the fundamental skills in criminal justice. The area in which our B.A. students continue to remain weak is in verbal communication. While writing skills vary among the students, the average student writes poorly. Clear, concise language usage is a critical skills in all areas of criminal justice. The faculty have proposed ways to address the problem, such as including a mandatory writing component

in 200-level courses and offering “writing across the curriculum” courses with other departments. In addition, CJ 412 is now a writing intensive course.

**To provide students with a cultural or global perspective.** Majors are required to take a Race and Ethnic Relations course. This course focuses on cross-cultural differences and cultural relativism. In addition, many majors are now opting to take nine hours of a foreign language. When advising, faculty discuss the advantages of learning a foreign language with each major.