

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
WSU Department of Criminal Justice
Self-Study Document, Fall 2011
Undergraduate Program

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The following is a summary of the lengthy self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full, self-study document itself.

Mission Statement:

The Department of Criminal Justice provides students with the professional and academic preparation necessary for entry level positions throughout the criminal justice system and related professions. The program addresses the functions and organization of the criminal justice system, integrating critical thinking, decision-making skills and the understanding of different cultures, ethics and social problems into the curriculum. The program provides the student with the preparation necessary for successful graduate study, and further endeavors to provide criminal justice professionals with career-enhancing educational experiences.

Curriculum:

The Department of Criminal Justice offers the following programs/degrees: a minor in criminal justice (18 credit hours of CJ courses), an Associate's Degree (which includes 21 credit hours of CJ courses), a B.S. degree (which includes 45 credit hours of CJ courses), and an M.S. Degree (36 credit hours of CJ graduate courses— see separate, self-study document for details about the graduate program). Neither the CJ minor, A.S Degree, nor the B.S. Degree have any special admission requirements.

The B.S. Degree by far graduates the most students and is therefore the "bread and butter" of our department. Aside from the forensics program (a special case, discussed below), the four year degree currently requires 21 credits of "core courses," plus 15 credits selected from listings in one of our four "emphases" areas (law enforcement, corrections, law & justice, or general emphasis), plus 9 credits of CJ electives to round out the 45 CJ credits needed for the major.

The forensics program, directed by our PhD chemist who is a nationally certified forensic scientist, currently requires students to choose between one of two tracks: Forensic Science Laboratory (for those wishing to work as a scientist within a crime lab) and Forensic Science Investigation (for those wishing a more general background including crime scene investigation). All forensic students currently must take the same 21 credits of core courses required of all criminal justice majors. Those following the forensic science laboratory track also take 14 credit hours of in-house criminal justice forensic science credits and must also double major in both Criminal Justice Forensic Science and in either Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, or Microbiology. Those students following a forensic science investigation track do not double major but do take various CJ forensic science credits as well as courses outside the department in chemistry,

physics, zoology, math and photography (among others).

The department is tentatively planning to completely revamp the requirements for the four year degree next year. Both the main program (non-forensics) as well as the forensics program will be redesigned.

As for the four year (non-forensics) degree, the faculty feel that requiring students to have an emphasis makes little sense (the criminal justice degree is already a specific enough major– no need for a “major within a major”). If things go as planned, the following changes will take place to the main program (the non-forensic science program):

1. The core will be expanded from 21 credits to 27 credits. All of the old core (except Senior Seminar) will remain. As part of this redesigned core, all students will be required to take a course in general policing, general corrections, and constitutional rights. Currently, only students doing a law enforcement emphasis need take a policing course, only students doing a corrections emphasis need take a corrections course, and only those students doing a law emphasis need take a constitutional rights course. The current faculty believe that every major should take these three courses, regardless of career plans.

2. The requirement that students select a 15 credit hour emphasis (the “major within a major”) will be abolished. Instead, students will simply round out the major by taking 18 credit hours of CJ electives (bringing them up to the 45 credit hours needed for the major).

The forensic science program will also undergo a significant change. Students will be able to graduate more quickly by not having to take all of the criminal justice core courses required of other CJ majors. The goal is to streamline the requirements without sacrificing any science-related quality.

Changes will also be made to the Associate’s Degree and to the Minor, largely reflecting the desire for students to be well-rounded in policing, corrections, theories of crime, and the law.

The Criminal Justice Department at Weber State currently offers 41 different courses with a CJ prefix. This is a very large and robust offering of topics. We do have plans to eliminate a small number of these courses that no current faculty has an interest in teaching anymore (this trimming will take place when we revamp the major next year). Despite this small reduction in offerings, the department will continue to offer a large and diverse set of courses (see full document for a complete listing of the current courses).

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

As outlined in the full report, upon graduating, all students receiving a **B.S. Degree** in criminal justice should demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

1. General understanding of the major theories of ethics
2. General understanding of the major theories of crime causation
3. Appreciation of constitutional values of due process, equal protection and fundamental fairness in policing, courts and corrections

4. General understanding of case processing in the system from arrest through parole
5. Effective written communication
6. General understanding of the fundamental concepts of the criminal law
7. Marketable credential for employment or graduate/law school
8. Tolerance of cultural differences in a diverse society
9. General understanding of the principles of social research and methodology
10. General understanding of the major issues involving police work

Students receiving an **A.S. Degree** or a **Minor** in Criminal Justice should:

1. Understand the major theories of crime causation
2. Grasp the fundamental concepts and nature of criminal law
3. Comprehend the fundamental goals and challenges facing police, courts and corrections in controlling crime and achieving justice

The Department of Criminal Justice has been filling annual assessment reports faithfully for years. The full report contains the most recent departmental assessment report that has been filed. This report, along with a “curriculum map” provided, should give the reader a strong sense of the methodologies of our assessment program. The full document also outlines the department’s new strategy for assessing our sole general education course, “Introduction to Criminal Justice.” This general education course has its own special learning objectives, common to the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at WSU.

Academic Advising:

All students are assigned an advisor on the basis of their last names. Flyers addressing this policy are posted in prominent locations in and near the departmental office. Students are encouraged to meet with a faculty advisor at least annually for course and program advisement and are free to meet with him/her as often as they like.

Faculty:

The Department currently has eight tenured or tenure track faculty (with a ninth position vacant due to budgetary constraints). Seven of the eight have PhD’s (two with a JD, PhD combination). The only faculty without a PhD has a JD and is currently finishing up a PhD at the University of Utah. When he finishes, all eight faculty will have the PhD, with three having a JD, PhD combination.

In addition to the above, the Department employs three, full-time, non-tenure track faculty, all of whom possess graduate degrees (Master’s or J.D.). One of these three helps out our PhD chemist in the forensics program, especially in the area of crime scene investigation. The other two work at our off-campus sites, directing our extension programs there.

The Department also makes use of a little over 20 adjunct faculty at any one time. The

Department is very heavily dependent (more than we would like) on these adjuncts to cover courses in our night program at the main campus, our program at Salt Lake Community College, and our program at the Davis County Campus of Weber State University.

Program Support:

In terms of personnel, our department secretary, Faye Medd, single-handedly manages an office that serves a large undergraduate program as well as a Master's Degree program. She is very capable and somehow does a superb job. Dr. Bruce Bayley serves as director of our graduate program. Professor Mike Chabries (full-time, non-tenure track) directs our extension program at Salt Lake Community College (we provide the last two years of our four year degree there; the community college provides the first two years of classes). Professor Brian Namba (full-time, non-tenure track) directs our program at the Davis County Campus of WSU.

In terms of equipment and facilities, the full-time faculty all have up to date desk top computers, Ipad 2's, and excellent classroom technologies. We also have a superb forensics lab, with many pieces of expensive equipment. The basement of our building also houses a computer lab and a testing center.

Relations with External Community

The faculty have many ties with the broader criminal justice community in the region. These ties include serving on the Police/Corrections Academy Advisory Board, serving as expert witnesses in court, instructing in the police academy and as an in-service instructor for the sheriff's office, writing appellate briefs for the public defender's association, and interning annually with the Utah State Crime Lab.

Closer to home, one of our faculty serves on the Executive Committee of the Weber State University Faculty Senate.

Student, Faculty, Contract/Adjunct Faculty and Staff Statistics

There are currently about 700 criminal justice majors served by our department, plus many non-majors who take our "Intro" course to satisfy a social science general education requirement. Student F.T.E. totals about 380 undergraduates and 30 graduate students at the current time. Our Department graduates about 100 students each year with a B.S. degree, with an additional 10 or so graduating with an A.S. degree and another 15 or so graduating with an M.S. degree. Exit surveys, done at graduation time by our department, indicate that most graduates are employed, but about three-fourths of the jobs are not related to criminal justice. The majority of our graduates indicate that they either want to continue with their current jobs, go on to a Master's program of some sort, or pursue federal criminal justice opportunities.

Faculty-wise, we have three tenured and five tenure track faculty (eight total). We are

doing very well with percentage of faculty having a PhD (all but one, and the sole hold out is finishing a PhD). Faculty diversity is another story. All tenured and tenure track faculty are white. Six of the eight are males. Of our three, full-time, non-tenure track faculty, all are males, two of whom are white, and one of whom is Asian American.

Staff-wise, our departmental secretary works unassisted but seems to be handling the work load (thanks to her skills and strong work ethic). She possesses a B.S. degree in computer information systems from Weber State and is comfortable with technology.

Our adjunct faculty, who are numerous (slightly over 20 at any one time) and on whom we are heavily dependent for night courses and off-campus courses, all have master's degrees or law degrees. They too lack diversity, as all but one are white and all but three are males.

Results of Previous Program Reviews:

Though the template for this Executive Summary does not ask for this, I wish to draw the reader's close attention to pages 31 through 34 of the full document. This section, entitled, "Results of Previous Program Reviews," which includes updates and commentary from the current department chair, does a good job of outlining the program's strengths and weaknesses identified last time a Program Review was undertaken in March, 2006. This section also discusses how the program has improved (or failed to make progress) since this last program review. In my opinion, this is too important a section not to be included as part of the Executive Summary, and I hereby am including it by way of reference to the full document.

Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:

Dr. David Lynch, Department Chair, is the author of this Executive Summary and the corresponding full-report. Dr. Bruce Bayley, Director of our Master's Degree Program, is the author of the Self-Study involving our graduate program (separate document).

The extra-departmental reviewers this year consist of one faculty member from the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences at Weber State University, one faculty member from Weber State University who is from a college other than the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, and two criminal justice professors from outside of Weber State University. These four reviewers are:

1. Andrew L. Giacomazzi, PhD– Professor and Chair, Dept. of Criminal Justice, Boise State University
2. Lisa Growette Bostaph, PhD– Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator, Dept. of Criminal Justice, Boise State University
3. Sara E. Dant, PhD– Professor, Dept. of History, Weber State University
4. Don R. Davies, PhD– Associate Professor, Dept. of Chemistry, Weber State University