

May 1, 2012

Dean's Response to the Program Review of the Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program

I appreciate the thought and effort that went into the Program Review Team's report, and into the Criminal Justice faculty's self-study and response to the report.

The Review Team found the Program to be one with many strengths: dedicated and collegial faculty, satisfied students, fine leadership, a recently revised curriculum, the forensic emphases, and a plan underway to improve outcomes assessment. The Team's report identified as well several challenges for the Program, and made a number of recommendations related to these challenges.

- It is difficult to schedule all the courses necessary to offer the bachelor's degree completely at night, a commitment that has appeared on department printed materials. The Team's report suggests that the recent revision of the curriculum may provide flexibility to ease this situation. The faculty response expresses concern that nearly all night courses are taught by adjunct faculty, thus limiting students' exposure to full-time department faculty, and asks whether the department must choose between preserving the at-night degree and exposing all students more to core faculty members. I would suggest that the faculty need to discuss the commitment to a night program: how important is it? If it is worth keeping in order to serve students, then ways can be discussed to achieve it. Are there feasible ways to incentivize faculty to teach more at night? Could the commitment be modified such that the degree is available through night classes *and/or online* classes?
- The Davis and Salt Lake Community College campuses: Almost all Criminal Justice teaching on these campuses is by contract and adjunct faculty. The Review Team perceived concern on the part of core faculty about quality of instruction at these campuses. The faculty response emphasized rather a sense of disconnection, of lack of ownership, among the core faculty, who rarely teach there, do not know the contract faculty members well, and for the most part do not know the adjuncts at all. The Team report suggested measures to maintain and enhance quality of teaching, such as professional development opportunities for satellite campus faculty. The Program response suggested incentives for core faculty to teach from time to time at Davis and SLCC, as well as consideration of eventually replacing retiring contract faculty there with tenured/tenure track faculty members. The annual funding to the Department from the Board of Regents for operating the SLCC 2+2 program could be a resource for such steps, which I will discuss with the Department faculty.

- The report concluded that the Program’s Forensic Science Emphases are a “gem,” but insufficiently integrated with the rest of the Program. It adduced suggestions toward that goal. The faculty response found merit in the concepts of having the forensic faculty teach some Criminal Justice core courses, and better publicizing the emphases to Criminal Justice students.

- The report raises the issue of the 4/4 teaching load and stresses arising from the competing demands of faculty scholarship and service. In a department with over 600 majors and a graduate program, this is understandable. The report suggests the possibility of selective course releases for research-active faculty. The faculty response agrees with the report that there is no “quick fix” for this issue, and notes that the chair encourages faculty members to minimize overload teaching so as to have more time for research. One possible avenue to reassigned time is external grants. The College instituted a grantwriting workshop this summer that pays faculty members a stipend upon submission of an external grant proposal. I encourage faculty who win external grants to negotiate with me about course releases during the terms of their grants. External funding can sometimes fund course releases.

- The report encourages the department to discuss what is its “primary focus,” and earmark resources accordingly. In their response, the faculty reply that the undergraduate program, due to its size, necessarily absorbs most of the work and resources, but that the graduate program currently needs “fixing,” and thus special attention. Appropriately, I think, they stress their commitment to both programs.

I believe that the Review Team report correctly identified and stressed the considerable strengths of the Criminal Justice Program, and made a number of useful suggestions. I support the positive responses of the Program to these suggestions.

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