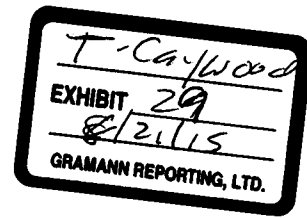


REVIEW



CRIMINAL JUSTICE & FORENSIC INVESTIGATION
DEGREE PROGRAMS
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – PLATTEVILLE

The following observations, opinions and suggestions were formulated after interviewing the interim chair of the department, twelve faculty members, students from three classes containing CJ and FI majors, and a cursory review of curriculum and program content from each Degree program. I also visited the "Crime Scene Home" and the "Learning-Living Center."

I have made every effort to make this report succinct.

Criminal Justice Program:

1. There has not been any new CJ Curriculum developed since 1990. A lack of productive departmental communications, a missing research component, the absence of effective leadership, and various personality conflicts have all contributed to a chasm between some elements of the faculty. These factors have combined to create a stagnant program which is not meeting some pertinent needs of the students or the professions for which they are being prepared. There are some very excellent faculty members in the Department who with leadership, appropriate motivation, and support could make a much greater contribution to the Department's success.
2. Several students, especially the military veterans, stated that many of the current programs were boring, outdated and irrelevant. They understood the need for theory, but they felt they would also need some hands-on practical instruction to develop the skill sets they would need immediately upon employment with a Criminal Justice Agency. To be employed by a Wisconsin agency they will need to obtain 706 hours of "Academy Law Enforcement Training" following graduation, at a cost of approximately \$3,500. With more appropriate curricula as recommended below, a large portion of the Academy's new subject requirements could be fulfilled while completing the CJ degree program(s). Some of the requirements, however, would be pure hands-on practical training and probably would not be appropriate for granting academic credit hours. The interim Chair and some members of the faculty are attempting to reach an agreement with the state's training standards officials but are finding a great deal of resistance. A faculty member has been assigned to review current curriculums and determine what modifications are needed to satisfy the new law enforcement training standards.

Recommendations: With the new effective leadership at the College and Department level, initiate a series of facilitated CJ program meetings with the faculty and selected students to develop new goals and learning outcomes for the Department. This process would necessarily need to consider the advances

or at least changes in the Criminal Justice field in the past 24 years and also the new law enforcement training standards recently promulgated by the state's legal entity for setting such standards. It is also strongly recommended that the program develop a series of courses that develop the students' problem solving and communication skills since these are the essential skills for success in the field of Criminal Justice.

Following the establishment of new "draft" learning outcomes, invite members of agencies in which CJ graduates could find employment and the state training standards group to review the proposal and provide feedback and input. Following adjustments and the formal adoption of learning outcomes, begin the peer review of all current course curricula in order to develop the necessary modifications and/or creation of new courses that will be congruent with the new direction of the program.

For those law enforcement training requirements not appropriate to academia, it is recommended that the College or Department consider the development of a Training unit that could provide non-academic training through fees and/or grants.

Attached is a link to a 20 minute presentation to the Eastern Kentucky University Board of Regents which explains all elements of the College of Justice and Safety including its three training units:

<http://training.eku.edu/videofiles/CJSBoRvideo.html>

I assume it will take some political intervention to have the training standards entity to seriously come to the table, but an increased probability of success might be enhanced if they were made aware of an impending major change in the CJ program that would include their welcomed input. A cautionary note is that I am sure that the College and Department leadership would insure that giving up the "academic soul" would not be the price of successful negotiations.

Forensics Investigation Program:

1. I was asked to assess the "FI" program for Academic Integrity. The Program was initiated by an individual with a Master's degree from National University, who had some "crime scene investigation" experience in a Colorado law enforcement agency. The young man obviously had excellent skills in developing and promoting the program since the University designated it as degree granting course of study. Currently, the initiator of the program has transferred to another administrative department as Director of Sponsored Programs. At the beginning of Fall Semester 2013, the only remaining tenure track faculty member was an individual with a Master's of Science Degree along with past experience in a Forensic Laboratory. The students rank her instruction as excellent. All other required courses for the degree are taught by

adjuncts. Several were hired at the last minute in the fall of 2013, when the coordinator of the program transferred to Sponsored Programs. Dr. Patrick Solar (PhD and former Police Chief) has subsequently been appointed to coordinate the program.

2. In meetings with the students located in two different classes, it was stated that some of the courses were very hands-on, interesting and practical. However, they thought that some of the adjunct professors did not appear to be very knowledgeable of the subject matter for which they were responsible.

Several students stated that they were not initially told that the program would not prepare individuals to work in a forensic crime lab. Some stated that they had never wanted to work in a police agency and now they have found out that the majority of jobs available, following the completion of this degree program, are only located in such agencies. Further, they can only obtain employment, following graduation, by successfully completing a Law Enforcement academy and becoming a police officer.

Students said there was a "crime scene house" but it was put to minimal use. Another student suggested that they should have been introduced to "cadavers" before their junior year, since some could not tolerate working with "dead people"

In my short time on campus, I was not able to determine the efficacy of granting 3 credit hours for finger printing or 3 credit hours for crime scene photography although both are skills needed to conduct an appropriate crime scene investigation.

Most telling were seniors in two separate classes that I visited, who said that there was **not enough content in the program** for a four year degree program. They further stated that their senior year was comprised mostly of courses that reviewed material that they had already mastered.

3. I was told by some faculty that many members of law enforcement agencies in Wisconsin were confused about what "Forensic Investigations" meant. They, like many of students, thought it was to prepare individuals to work in "forensic labs" in which there are very few positions available.
 - **Recommendations:** Reformat the program and make it a degree track compatible with the broader topic encompassing "Criminal Justice" degree program. Rename the program to a title analogous to "**Police Sciences**" which could then allow for an expanded number of relevant topics that require scientific knowledge; i.e. Cyber Crime, Fraud Investigation, Terrorist Activity, Use of DNA, etc. etc. Add a relevant Physics course to the mix, since it would seem impossible to make sense of crime scene phenomena such as blood splatter or bullet path projections without some knowledge of physics.

I would certainly retain some of the programs relevance to "CSI" since many of your students, like ours, have been stimulated to seek a degree in this area because of the popularity of the many CSI television series.

At the same time, it is also recommended to make a degree track in Corrections. Both tracts could have some of the newly revised CJ courses (recommend above) as part of their base format.

With the tracks, the Department would have three degree formats (Criminal Justice, Police Sciences, and Corrections) This type of degree formatting should meet the needs of most of the Public Safety agencies who would potentially hire the Department's graduates.

Distance Learning Programs:

Although I was impressed with the individuals coordinating both the graduate and undergraduate CJ On-line programs, I did not find much involvement from the CJ faculty. I believe the method developed by the University to administer Distant Learning Programs is not the most conducive to rapid growth. Since universities in Wisconsin, as in many other states, are now much more dependent on revenue generated from tuition, successful Distant Learning ventures are critical for their future survival.

- **Recommendations:** With the knowledge that Columbia University had invested \$3,000,000 in Distance Learning and failed, we looked for successful programs we could emulate. We used the University of Cincinnati's on-line Criminal Justice Master's Program as a model. They initially capped their enrollment at 500 and now at 1000. We started our program eight years ago with two programs. After 5 years, the College was able to give the University \$1,300,000 and the infrastructure for a University wide Distance Learning Program. This spring, ECU has 24 degree programs on-line which produced 26,660 credit hours for the semester. The program is outlined in the link provided above. For more detailed information regarding this very effective e-campus structure one may contact Mr. Tim Matthews who is the Director of ECU E-Campus.

While conducting the review, I was greeted with warmth, openness and trust by the vast majority of staff, faculty and students. For that I am grateful. I have attempted in every way possible not to violate their confidences. Some expressed an interest to visit our campus to view various elements of our program. They will be most welcome.

For those who requested to monitor our "Social Intelligence" on-line course in communications, we have already made arrangements to accommodate that request.

My deepest respect to both my old and new friends at the University of Wisconsin at Platteville,

Report prepared and submitted by,

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