

Final Report

Program Review

Of

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

Bachelor of Science in Forensic Investigation

Platteville, Wisconsin

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Introduction

The purpose of this review is to provide guidance and direction to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Education and the interim departmental chair of the criminal justice department at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Both Dean Elizabeth Throop and Interim Chair Mike Dalecki contacted me regarding my availability to conduct a review in a short period of time and directed toward answering a specific set of questions concerning the criminal justice department at the University of Wisconsin—Platteville. I agreed to conduct the review, but I suggested that an in-depth review was not possible given time constraints (for example, very little that follows addresses the undergraduate on-line program or the on-line master's degree program), and that if a more thorough review was sought, I would contact the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) to inquire about their review process and solicit them on how best to proceed forward. The academy is the closest organization the field of criminal justice has as a national accrediting body, but it is not recognized as an accrediting body by any educational institution in the country.

As well as documents (course syllabi and faculty vitae) that were sent to me prior to my visit, I also was able to meet individually with both faculty and staff. In addition, I did meet with the faculty as a whole. Interviews were conducted with faculty and staff. These interviews, along with supporting documentation, serve as the basis for the recommendations that follow. The criminal justice department is at a crossroads, attempting to solidify its mission and vision at a time when resources are limited and faculty and staff consensus on matters are, in some cases, divergent. This latter situation may be seen as part of a transitional process from a particular way

of doing business to another way of doing business. The “pains of transition” were evident in my discussions with faculty and staff, yet the department still has the capability to move forward.

The criminal justice department at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville has a long successful history. The integrity of this storied history must be maintained and an identity created that both recognizes the past but also values a future orientation that promotes the best in criminal justice education. By addressing some of the recommendations provided in this report, in tandem with the dean and the interim chair, I believe the criminal justice department can flourish and promote an educational experience that will continue to be valued by students. The focus of this report will be to suggest a new path moving forward that recognizes the diversity of faculty and staff, and more importantly, the benefit of a clear mission and vision moving forward.

The relevance of criminal justice education hinges on how well the academic department connects to the criminal justice field. This may mean a number of things to different people. I have learned that the primary role for criminal justice education is to prepare students for professional careers in the criminal justice system. This, too, means different things to different people. I believe it is still commonly accepted in the criminal justice field that the role of higher education is to prepare people for positions in the criminal justice system with key skills and competencies: clear and effective writing skills, sufficient and well developed speaking skills, and the ability to pose arguments and analyze them. These skills have been expounded by learning commissions for the past twenty years as the core of what a college educated person should possess. The Higher Learning Commission, for example, has stressed the importance of writing, speaking, and argumentative analysis as essential skills college educated people should have subsequent to graduation. I learned that the criminal justice faculty and staff

hold these ideas as well and it is reflected in the types of courses offered and how they are taught. This is an important point that must not be lost when deciphering some of the practical questions and concerns addressed later in the report.

Second, while criminal justice education is not one of the traditional disciplines found in the university community, it does borrow very heavily from other disciplines, for example, psychology, sociology, and political science to mention a few. In recent years, we have seen the maturing of criminal justice education where there are more criminal justice departments and the quality of criminal justice education has improved tremendously. As such, newer faculty in criminal justice have been trained in the importance of being rigorous with students and holding themselves to higher standards of teaching, scholarship, and service. In the past 20 years, the field of criminal justice education has exploded, and the rapid expansion has produced greater demands and expectations of both students and faculty alike. For the most part, the reliance on former police officers to teach a majority of criminal justice courses is gone. The focus, therefore, of criminal justice education is now directed toward preparing students so they are versed with modern technologies to address crime, but also the importance of critical decision making skills and new scholarship and thinking analytically when confronting crime. This requires faculty who are educated and contribute to the growing body of knowledge about the criminal justice system.

Finally, students are both the same and different from their predecessors. They require the skills mentioned above, but in addition, they face challenges that did not exist even 10 years ago: a rapidly competitive world, an increased debt load associated with the college experience, more demands on their personal and family time, and rapidly changing technologies and more competition from those providing college degrees, i.e., publics, privates, and even proprietary

colleges. The competition is stiff, but universities have to be more sensitive and malleable to the changing student and the world they face and will be facing. Educating these students will require a university bureaucracy that is more responsive and nimble, yet focused on a clear purpose, mission, and vision. The University of Wisconsin-Platteville values academic integrity, excellence, and teaching, among other values, and is committed to making the educational experience rewarding for students. The same view was espoused by faculty and staff in the criminal justice department when I visited the university. The challenge arises and will remain on how best to achieve this outcome with limited resources and a diverse student population.

With these views as a backdrop, I will offer answers to the questions posited to me as part of the program review. My intention is to be prospective, and to provide answers to specific questions that enable the criminal justice department to flourish and move forward. At the conclusion of each section, I provide recommendations as well.

Quality of Program and Coursework

The criminal justice degree was initially created with the belief in a broad based liberal arts philosophy, stressing humanities, physical sciences, and social sciences. This seems to still be the case. A review of the core degree requirements indicates an interest in maintaining the liberal arts focus, yet there have been changes to the departmental requirements over the past four years that question the direction of the major. A change in direction is not problematic by itself, but it must be assessed within the context of what the mission and vision of the department is and how that comports with the practices of criminal justice education nationally. Additionally, the value of a strong department chair cannot be understated. The department chair

will work with faculty and staff to move the department forward. Departmental leadership has been lacking in the last few years, and this has caused major problems in the department.

Most striking is the creation of a Forensics Investigation (FI) major alongside the criminal justice major in the department. For all intents and purposes, a new major was created and promoted in the forensics area, new staff were hired, and resources were directed at the program, with an emphasis in critically training and educating people for positions within a broad array of possible forensics careers, e.g., crime scene technician, death investigation, and police officer position, to mention a few. Later in this report I will respond more directly regarding the creation of the FI major, but for now, I want to place a discussion of the FI major in the context of the quality of the major as offered by the criminal justice department.

No other topic generated so much discussion, and in some cases vitriolic discussion, than the process used to create the FI major in the criminal justice department. Some felt the major was pushed through with very little faculty review and input, others felt the FI major was a new advance that offered promise and hope to students interested in pursuing some type of career in forensics. A review of the FI curriculum reveals that it is very heavily focused on the technical aspects of forensics, i.e., fingerprinting, photography, criminalistics, etc. A student majoring in FI only has to take 3 courses in the criminal justice major: Introduction to Criminal Justice, Research Methods in Criminal Justice, and Criminal Law. This limited number of criminal justice core classes makes the criminal justice major subservient to the FI major, when in reality, as I will explicate later, it should be the other way around.

The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences has held for over 10 years that every criminal justice major have fundamental exposure to the following courses as part of the major:

introduction to criminal justice, introduction to police systems, introduction to correctional systems, introduction to court systems, a criminological theory course, a research methods course, all subsumed under the umbrella of a diverse liberal arts curriculum. The FI major does address the latter concern in its degree requirements, but what is especially problematic is the idea that “technical” based courses are being offered for academic credit where they might be best offered through a technical school or college, not a university setting. The Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, for example, is adamantly opposed to providing training courses under the rubric of a university degree granting program. One faculty member stated it bluntly: “what a police officer needs to know about fingerprinting and photography can be learned in 2 days, not in 15 weeks and definitely not in an academic course at a university.” There are two levels of concern, one is substantively and the other is the academic rigor of these courses. Again, later in this report I will offer suggestions on how this issue can be addressed.

In addition, there was concern expressed by many faculty and staff that the academic rigor has suffered over a number of years. No one interviewed who suggested this as an issue could really pinpoint the time or event that may have precipitated the perception of declining academic rigor in the program, yet many people interviewed felt that the courses are either “too easy” or not rigorous enough to develop skills required of a college-educated person entering a criminal justice career. This position was echoed by both full time faculty and academic staff and is reflected in the SWOT analysis. In particular, the SWOT analysis revealed concerns, for example, over the quality of the on-line undergraduate program and its reliance on adjunct faculty.

Faculty are never really satisfied with student performance, a common lament of faculty everywhere, but what is problematic is if students are deprived of the courses necessary to

develop skills required of criminal justice professions and tied ultimately to the mission and vision of the department. The current mission statement indicates the importance of “...preparing our students to move successfully into criminal justice careers...” Yet, there seems to be a disjuncture between this goal and how courses are structured and offered in the curriculum. So, for example, if writing proficiency is an issue for criminal justice students what is being done to address this problem? How do we know there is a problem with student writing? Are there courses and resources to improve student writing performance? Do our courses demand writing as part of the assessment procedure of student performance? The latter point is very important for the criminal justice department, since my review of course syllabi reveals a very limited writing expectation (most paper assignments were under 3 pages) and in some courses there was no writing expectation at all. In terms of academic rigor, if you really do not have the resources or wherewithal to demand more rigorous writing expectations of students, then simply do not state this as one of your professed expectations for them. It is often times stated that students cannot write effectively, but do we place that expectation on them when they are in our courses? The lack of writing skills among students was apparent to everyone I interviewed, but addressing this deficiency was not evident in the syllabi that I reviewed, as it seemed, at best, that most instructors and faculty in the department demand very little writing among students in their courses. This is obviously not true for all faculty and staff, but a general practice is that not much writing is actually expected of students through the courses in the department.

A concern regarding the degree to which the curriculum reflects current issues and trends was expressed by a number of faculty and staff. One interviewee suggested that the curriculum has not been updated in over 2 decades. Another person felt the curriculum has failed to seize on

some new topics that would be of interest to students. A course on cyber-crime, for example, was suggested by one person as a topic that could be offered to students to up-date the curriculum. There may be other courses as well that could be added to the curriculum, such as human trafficking, white collar crime, to mention a few. Faculty and staff will have to address this concern, as saliency is an important consideration for students. The students expect a curriculum that will both prepare them for careers in criminal justice, but in addition, will be cutting edge and reflect conditions and events in the real world that impact them and society at large.

Another concern expressed by some faculty and staff deal with adherence to policies and procedures, both departmental police and procedures and university wide policies and procedures. Some faculty and staff expressed the point of view that while there are current university policies and policies regarding a host of issues and activities, e.g., personnel policies, disciplinary policies, and designated roles and responsibilities, with attendant levels of authority, many of the policies and procedures are not followed or simply dismissed. This is a theme raised by faculty and staff concerning a number of issues. In fact, many of the problems that have been generated in recent times can be traced back to a lack of adherence to extant policies and procedures. In addition, oftentimes departments inappropriately believe they may enact any policies or procedures without first seeing how a proposed policies or procedures fit into current university policies or procedures or system wide policies or procedures. System wide policies and procedures trump university policies and procedures and university policies and procedures trump departmental policies and procedures. An awareness of this fundamental truth is lost on many faculty and staff, but more importantly, faculty and staff need to know their own policies and procedures.

Recommendations

(1) The criminal justice department should hire an outside facilitator to direct a strategic planning session with the faculty. The department is having an identity crisis right now and given the recent history of disagreement and rancor over how things have been addressed and what the criminal justice department is really trying to accomplish and what it envisions its future to be it is necessary that a facilitator work with the department faculty and staff to clearly delineate larger departmental goals, strategic initiatives, strategic tasks, and links budgetary decisions to these tasks along with a timeline of deliverables. This planning effort will allow the air to clear in the department, as well as instill clear accountability standards for faculty and staff.

(2) There should be an active search for a permanent chair in the department. The department is currently being led by an interim chair. This was a necessity given problems and concerns raised over the past 2 years. It is time, now, for the department to conduct a national search for a department chair who can work with faculty and staff to move forward.

(3) Serious consideration should be given to remove Forensics Investigation (FI) as a major. As stated, no other issue has generated a separation between faculty and staff than the process used to create the FI major. Given some of my comments regarding academic rigor, as well as the process for creating the FI major, and how the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences views fundamentally “training” courses within an academic curriculum, the status of major is not warranted for FI. This is not to suggest that FI has no role within a university setting, but how it is structured requires further examination. I will have another recommendation for how FI should be structured later in the report.

(4) The criminal justice department should begin an evaluation and review of its courses to guarantee that academic rigor is provided. There needs to be greater involvement and review of courses by faculty and staff across the curriculum that maintains academic rigor both with reference to the quality of instruction but also the pedagogical soundness of courses. This can only be accomplished through the participation of faculty and staff working together to create a structure that views academic rigor as a primary responsibility of all parties in the department. An appeal may be made to campus resources to see what can be provided to the department regarding student assessment and the application of modern assessment techniques to all courses.

(5) The criminal justice department should constitute a committee or empower a current committee to examine and review its policies and procedures. This review should be placed in the context of wider university wide policies and procedures and system wide policies and procedures.

Forensic Investigation Program

The Forensic Investigation (FI) program was given approval in 2010 by the central administration. Many faculty and staff have divergent points of view regarding the FI program. For all intents and purposes, the curriculum is managed and taught for the most part by 2 faculty members, both of whom have a master's degree qualification as their final degrees. The program has a wide array of courses and the connection to other campus departments seems tentative at best. This latter point is probably the most serious concern I have regarding the FI program. Other concerns and problems were noted by faculty and staff regarding the FI program, but fundamentally, the concerns among both faculty and staff in the department center on two issues.

First, the process and implementation of the FI program was done in a unilateral way and involved very few faculty and staff members. In fact, I was not able to discern exactly how the FI program actually started, except to say it was something that the campus administration wanted to see happen. This created the perception among faculty and staff that they had no choice in determining if FI was a good idea, and even if it was a good idea, there was no clear faculty involvement in program development and implementation. As a result, the dramatic appeal of the program became a nightmare to manage, especially when the department experienced unprecedented growth with no concomitant increase in resources, either faculty resources or other resources. The criminal justice department grew from roughly 400 majors in 2006 to 950 majors by 2014, with most of this growth attributable to the FI program, causing a division in the department among not only faculty and recently staff, but more importantly, confusion on the connection between the criminal justice major and the developing FI major. The creation of a separate FI major, exacerbating an already rancorous division between some faculty and staff and the attendant problems of attention to curriculum development, the advising of students, and the devotion of faculty to research and scholarly efforts, created a difficult working environment for all parties. This situation still exists today in the department.

You could describe this situation as a “perfect storm,” with disastrous consequences and divisions between some faculty and staff. Moreover, the attendant problems associated with the FI program only became worse as a result of a perception of poor leadership or limited leadership in the department. Many interviewees expressed the concern over the quality of leadership in the department when the FI program was suggested and during its framing and reframing from the time period of 2006-to the present day. To suggest the sole source of difficulty with the FI program and the criminal justice department in general lies in departmental

leadership, however, misses the larger point that the FI major should not have been ever created in the first place. Departmental leadership is important to addressing the problematic nature of the FI major, but the consequential problems as a result of the creation and perpetuation of the FI program goes well beyond departmental leadership. Campus administration and the dean's office must shoulder some responsibility for the train wreck that occurred much later.

Second, there is a huge concern among both faculty members and staff about the employment of students who major in FI. One staff member felt that there are a number of career options available for students in the FI field, but at best, this is an assertion with limited empirical support. Many faculty members expressed concern over how the FI program not only diverts resources from the criminal justice department, but that it does a disservice to students who believe there are many career opportunities upon graduation from the FI degree when in reality there may be limited career opportunities for graduates. This is a legitimate concern, as many criminal justice departments across the country wrestle with how best to situate forensics within their departments.

For some, there is no integration of forensics into their departments, and at best there may be some course offerings, but clearly no major in it. This is done, in part, because there is a belief that career opportunities within the forensics field are limited. For others, forensics is viewed as a minor or a certificate program within the criminal justice major. In the latter approach, the issue of career aspirations is set during an initial introductory course in the certificate program. This course serves as a screener course for subsequent courses in the forensics program. Most importantly, the integrity of the certificate program and courses in is guaranteed by a campus wide effort that involves multiple academic departments. Under this approach, a forensics program has buy in from other academic departments, such as chemistry, biology, clinical lab

sciences, anthropology, and health sciences. This broad based support for forensics not only guarantees academic integrity but also allows the benefits and costs of the program to be spread out among departments on campus.

In the not too distant future, the criminal justice department will have to come to grips as to how it wishes the forensics program to proceed. The subsequent recommendations will offer some guidance in this regard. It is clear that the FI program has brought with it many students over a short period of time, but the increase in the number of students has also produced attendant problems and concerns that must be addressed and forces the department to ask some serious questions about its future as currently organized.

Recommendations

(1) Consistent with an earlier recommendation remove the major designation from the forensics program. Convene a group of potential academic partners on campus and in the broader community to develop a certificate program in forensics. Broaden it to include forensics as structured along certificate concentrations that are aligned with faculty interests in the departments across campus. You may, for example, find there are faculty members who are strong in forensic toxicology or forensic science in the chemistry department. Develop courses appropriate in number and quality that provide specific skills that would make forensics graduates marketable for specific career aspirations. I would recommend that you view the website of the forensics program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (www4.uwm.edu/cfs) as an example for how to structure the certificate program.

(2) Begin conversations with campus resources to specify with greater clarity career opportunities for those who graduate with a certificate in forensics. In addition, since the

forensics investigation program was initially justified, in part, as an effort that would increase the competency of police recruits develop a working group within the criminal justice department to examine if this assumption is, in fact, still tenable. The product of the group would be to see how many current forensics courses could be better integrated into the existing curriculum within the criminal justice major. Additionally, such a review might lead toward discussions with technical schools in the region to provide some of the more practical elements of course work that does not meet the academic rigor of courses offered by the department.

Program Growth

As stated earlier, the program has experienced tremendous growth over the past 5 years. A number of interviewees expressed concern over the amount of student advising required as a result of this growth. One interviewee felt that the advising load was too high and not everyone pitches in equally to contribute to student advising in the department. This issue is important to address for a number of reasons, but most importantly, how does advising take people away from teaching and research responsibilities? Is the time spent on advising detrimental to offering more courses or a better utilization of faculty and staff to teach a wider array of courses? One of the points raised in the SWOT analysis was that the advising load was too high and the number of upper division courses available to students too low.

A major concern is how a huge advising load works against other faculty and staff activities, such as providing more upper division courses and the development of more research among faculty members. With an estimated student population at 950 students and 16 faculty members and academic staff, there must be a discussion regarding performance expectations and how faculty and staff time is best allocated. Moreover, there is a clear perception that faculty and academic staff are not treated the same, and that the communication between the two groups

is limited and currently strained. Much of this problem can be traced to the fractured leadership that has occurred in the department over the past few years. What may have been a hidden understanding of the differences between doctoral educated faculty and masters or legally trained academic staff has been heightened by some of the abrupt changes in the department and has created a chasm between the two groups. This report will offer recommendations later on how this issue can be addressed.

The discussion regarding the growth in the department over the past five years centers on the creation of the FI program. This growth by itself is not a bad thing, but it must be understood that such a large growth in the number of students may require further discussion concerning resources. In addition, depending upon what the future structure (see recommendations in previous section of the report) of the FY program will be decisions will have to be made to focus more activity on the creation of a culture of academic excellence and predicated on the standards of criminal justice education as promulgated by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. This means a belief and support for doctoral trained faculty. Currently, the faculty is split between academic staff and doctoral trained faculty and those on the faculty who only have attained a master's degree. The division between these two groups and within the groups was noted earlier in the report.

Both groups have a role in the criminal justice department, but it must be reinforced through the dean's office and the departmental chair that doctoral trained faculty members have the guiding role in the department. This reality sets the tone for how decisions are made in the department. This does not mean that doctoral faculty members dominate over the academic staff. Excellent criminal justice departments across the country understand the integration of the two groups into a vibrant community of scholars and practitioners, integrating theory into

practice as part of the educational experience of students and the advancement of knowledge in the criminal justice field.

Moreover, the SWOT analysis revealed that the criminal justice department has an uneven portfolio of courses between lower division courses and upper division courses. Additionally, there may be some opportunities with new course content to reach students who are criminal justice majors as well as non-majors and update the curriculum. Such courses are cyber-crime, white collar crime, and organized crime to mention a few. The curriculum does offer a host of elective courses, many of whom are identified in the FI major. With the structural change in the FI major proposed and recommended earlier in the report, there is an opportunity to develop more academically challenging courses, both traditionally delivered courses and on-line courses, in the department. At the end of the day, the creation of these upper division courses, along with the lower division courses, will define the structure of the criminal justice major in a clearer way and provide more certainty and clarity to faculty, staff, and students on what a criminal justice degree means.

Recommendations

(1) Convene a group of faculty and staff from across campus to determine best practices in the advising of students. The issue of advising in the department is not only a workload issue; it is also an issue of educational quality. The perception among many of the academic staff is that the burden of advising is disproportionately covered by them. This perception may or may not be true. There needs to be a clarification of workload issues regarding advising, and the culture of the department must change concerning the importance of advising. As a campus that has a major emphasis on quality teaching and advising pursuant to its mission, there must be a frank

discussion on where advising fits into the culture of the department. The current perception of lack of importance of advising in the department, especially as perceived by the academic staff vis-à-vis the faculty, must change.

(2) Contact the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) to begin the process of conducting a program review for the department. This type of review is much more exhaustive and directive and can provide some concrete recommendations to the criminal justice department. The goal of an ACJS review is not simply standards' compliance, but also program redefinition and alignment. This alignment comports with the standards promoted by the academy and comes closest to an accreditation review process in the criminal justice education field. Moreover, such a review will gauge how the criminal justice department matches up with other criminal justice departments from across the country. It can be a good assessment that enables the criminal justice department to move forward toward a plan of action that is consistent with academic and professional peer institutions ascribing to similar standards as promulgated by ACJS.

(3) Consider the use of a mediator to address climate issues within the department. It has been noted the divisions that exist between faculty members and academic staff. Much of this division is predicated on rumor and innuendo, with very little fact. Yet, having said this there are still legitimate concerns between faculty members and academic staff that must be addressed. Most of these concerns center on faulty or poor communication among parties and the lack of clear leadership in the department. In addition, there must be acknowledgement that the tension that exists is also within the faculty ranks, i.e., Full Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors. A skilled mediator can ferret out fact from fiction and work with the differing parties to guarantee a positive climate going forward.

(4) If not present construct a curriculum committee in the department. This curriculum committee will work toward the update of the departmental courses, which includes the deletion of outdated courses and the addition of other more relevant courses. There have been many changes within society and responses by criminal justice agencies to crime. The curriculum committee should work in tandem with recommendations from the ACJS review mentioned above to make sure the course work meets minimal ACJS standards and reflects emerging trends and themes. An update and review of departmental curriculum was a major issue of concern expressed among faculty members and academic staff.

New Initiatives

The department is addressing changes in state requirements regarding certification qualifications for new police officers. The proposed increase from 520 hours to 708 hours of recruit school training required for all newly certified police officers in the state raises concern among some of the faculty that this change could possibly affect student enrollment. In addition, some faculty and staff had expressed their concern over two issues: the redundancy of the newly proposed recruit training school with current criminal justice course work and the cost to students. It has been suggested that the cost could rise as high as \$5,000 for the students, and since the proposed program cannot be accomplished in the summer and under current financial aid packages for students, many of them will be priced out of the market.

It is definitely a benefit for some students to have access to a certification program while still as an undergraduate, yet I am not convinced how much of a problem this might be for the department. I would want to know how many students actually are interested in such a program. What do we know about numbers of students who actually matriculate through such a program?

More importantly, is this activity necessarily part of the mission of the department? It is clear the department's current mission statement involves the preparation of students for careers in criminal justice, but does the department necessarily have to integrate the law enforcement standards for certification into its curriculum to achieve this mission? The certification program at my university is done in tandem with the local technical school subsequent to graduation. The criminal justice department in my school does not engage in any programming geared toward law enforcement certification, as this activity is inconsistent with our mission which is to educate, not train, people for criminal justice careers. Moreover, an argument can be made that this type of integration of certification competencies into the undergraduate curriculum is more appropriate for the technical schools, not the university. This is similar to an earlier comment regarding the FI courses. A university is not in the business of training; it is in the business of education. Finally, such an effort might run counter to the ACJS standards mentioned earlier. As stated earlier, ACJS is opposed to criminal justice departments offering training courses for academic credit.

The Rockford Dual-Enrollment Project is a new initiative that will begin in the fall, 2014. A group of 60 students will be enrolled for up to 8 credits for advanced standing credit. The credits would only be transferrable to UW-Platteville, similar to other advance standing programs offered by colleges and universities. The goal of the program is to offer a pipeline to the criminal justice department at UW-Platteville and ensure some steady student numbers and diversifying the department and the university by having more students of color on campus.

The program on its surface is a positive effort. Like other efforts the program has to be set up for the right reasons and properly resourced to be effective. How much faculty and staff time will be directed toward the program? Who will be in charge of the program and serve as the

liaison to the high school? What role do officials at the high school play in the program? These questions, along with many others, need to be fleshed out before the program begins in fall, 2014. The devil is in the details! My sense is that the department has already answered some of these questions. Such an effort can be very successful, but it will be important to discuss and determine appropriate selection criteria for students interested in the program, concerns over student preparedness for admission to the university require attention, mentoring of students must exist, and an assessment process that monitors student success while enrolled at the university should be put into place prior to the program beginning in fall, 2014. Too often such novel programs are created in haste, only to fail because they were not totally thought out and/or an appropriate implementation plan and evaluation plan were not put into place at the inception of the program.

Recommendations

(1) The criminal justice faculty and staff re-evaluate the importance and relevance of the proposed change in law enforcement recruitment certification to the mission of the department. I know there has already been much discussion about this proposed change in state police officer certification requirements and the impact on criminal justice students and the criminal justice degree. The department should begin data collection on the numbers of students who actually pursue such an option and how many are likely to enroll in such a program going forward. Most importantly, the department needs to discuss and seriously consider the importance of the proposed change in state police certification standards relative to the mission of the department. The integration of largely training competencies into an academic curriculum is very problematic given the academic mission of the department and the national standards of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.

(2) The criminal justice department should pursue the Rockford-Dual Enrollment Project. The program has the potential to be a pipeline for students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend a university. As suggested earlier, consideration should be given to determine purpose and scope of the program, issues of authority and responsibility for the program, and appropriate resources for the program. This effort has the potential to be a major contributor to the department and the university. Both the department and the university must be prepared to address problems and concerns as they arise in the program, e.g., student preparation for college.

Accreditation

The university will be entering into a re-accreditation process in 2016. The criminal justice department will have to begin to collect data for the accreditation review. Most of this review will involve the production of responses to specific questions and concerns. Most notable is the issue of student assessment and performance. In addition, the accreditation agency will want to know explicit activities of faculty regarding their teaching, scholarship and research, and service activities. This all must be documented.

The major concern that I have with the department with the upcoming accreditation is the systematic collection of data and leadership in the department. These two issues are intertwined. Good leadership requires good data. Mechanisms must be put into place that allow for the collection of data on student performance, teaching, faculty and staff scholarship and research, and service. The department must improve its data collection efforts and integrate and apply findings to its decision-making processes on all relevant dimensions of activity directly related to

its mission. This will improve the leadership functions of those designated with authority to make decisions on behalf of the faculty and staff, most directly the department chair.

There is no nationally recognized accreditation body in the criminal justice education field. The importance of criminal justice education standards rests solely with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. I have referred to some of their standards earlier in this report. I have already recommended they be contacted to set up a review of the criminal justice department. I believe this review will provide a baseline from which the criminal justice department can move forward.

Recommendations

(1) Begin a conversation with university officials to understand the re-accreditation process that will take place in 2016. Determine university wide expectations for the department regarding accreditation. Convene a committee of faculty and staff to begin a discussion on what data sources will be needed for the accreditation review and initiate a process to collect data necessary to address questions and concerns regarding the departmental response to the accreditation review.

Conclusion

The criminal justice department at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville has a long history of producing quality graduates, many of whom go onto successful careers both in the criminal justice system and outside the criminal justice system. The success of graduates has been directly related to the type of education they received while attending the university. The criminal justice department is at a crossroads, seeking to refine its mission consistent with what has been done in the past, but more importantly, what is necessary for the future. **At its core, the**

criminal justice degree is based on a solid liberal arts education. Student success will be much more likely if this tradition of integrating the liberal arts into the criminal justice major is maintained. Additionally, the department requires an on-going assessment on how it can best proceed forward within this liberal arts context: what updates to curriculum are required, what new courses should be added, what courses should be dropped, and what type of faculty are needed to move forward. This latter point is significant, since the criminal justice field requires a balance between faculty and staff that are academically educated and those who have had practical experience in the criminal justice system. The best faculty members are those who have both qualities to some degree.

Departmental leadership is paramount at this point in time within the department. This means not only having a committed departmental chair, but in addition, faculty and staff who are able to work together and assume leadership roles where appropriate. Leadership does not only exist with some positions in the department; it exists in multiple positions. The collective faculty and staff have to work together to produce a quality educational experience for students, to produce knowledge to advance the criminal justice field, and to offer service to the practicing criminal justice community. I believe the criminal justice faculty and staff are ready to move forward, and they should consider the recommendations provided in this report as a way to structure their thinking and activities moving forward.

I want to thank all the faculty and staff who agreed to be interviewed for this review. I especially want to thank Dean Elizabeth Throop and Interim Chair Mike Dalecki for providing me the opportunity to conduct this review.