Assessment Plan

Program: Criminal Justice – BA

Executive Director: Dr. James Drylie

College: Business & Public Management

School of Criminal Justice & Public Administration

Kean University

Mission:
The mission of the Department of Criminal Justice is to prepare students as criminal justice academics and professionals who will contribute to the community, profession and discipline through critical thinking, research and participation in the criminal justice system or academia. Students in the program will develop a broad understanding of the criminal justice system including the correctional, courts, and juvenile justice systems; the application and substantive nature of the law, corrections, and policing.

Assessment Process:

Criminal Justice students have 9 core courses to take as part of the requirements for the major. These core courses provide a sound backbone of the discipline with regard to the research and theoretical aspects of criminological and organizational theory as well as the various areas of study within the field. As such, the core courses are the primary vehicle for assessing the knowledge of our students. Beyond the 9 core courses, students take 3 other courses offered within our program that focus on 4 concentrations. Each core course has assessment tools as part of the evaluation process; however, culminating assessment is done in the Senior Capstone course.

Each core course incorporates assessment tools such as exams, research papers, quantitative assignments and presentations as part of the evaluation process and the program has used results of assessment for making improvements to program practices aimed at increasing student learning. For example, in the Research Methods Class (CJ-3675) quite a few students struggled with the methodology and data analysis assignments. Upon reviewing students’ course audits; it was observed that there was a strong correlation between performance in CJ-3675 and whether students had completed the required Statistics course. As a result, in Fall 2009 Statistics became a pre-requisite for research methods and faculty have observed that student performance in this course has significantly improved.

Beginning Fall 2011, the culminating assignment done in the Capstone Course (CJ 4600) has been identified as a direct measure for assessing attainment of our program Student Learning Outcomes. In addition to the term-long research project that will be used as a direct measure of SLOs 4 and 5 (listed below), a knowledge test is administered in this course to provide a direct measure for SLOs 1-3. These direct measures were piloted in Fall 2011, and the data will be evaluated by faculty in January to assess the effectiveness of the instruments and make modifications in them for Spring 2012. Outcome data will also be evaluated in January to draw preliminary conclusions on student performance on SLOs. Moving forward, each semester composite data from scored student assignments will be collected to inform our decisions on program improvements. Each May, CJ faculty will spend a day analyzing

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assessment data, evaluating the success of current pedagogy & recent interventions, and charting initiatives for the coming academic year.

Beginning in the fall of 2012, pre- and post-test measures will be piloted in three pre-capstone courses: CJ-2600/Criminal Justice in America; CJ-2610/Criminology; and CJ-3685/Substantive Criminal Law. These courses were selected because earlier student learning outcomes data gathering efforts revealed that criminal justice majors, both native and transfer students, are not as knowledgeable about criminological theory and law, the subjects covered in CJ-2610 and CJ-3685 respectively.

Additionally, CJ-2600, Criminal Justice in America, is the soup-to-nuts introductory course for majors and is a logical start class for a pre-capstone assessment of student learning outcomes. In all three courses, short pre- and post-test quizzes (e.g., 10-questions) will be administered to enrolled students, counting as a small portion of students' final course grades. Identical questions will be given for both pre- and post-test, with the hypothesis that students will improve in the knowledge areas by post-test. CJ-2600 questions will focus on general areas of the criminal justice system (e.g., policing, the courts, corrections). CJ-2610 questions will inquire about criminological theory; that is, why certain individuals do or do not commit crime, and why certain neighborhoods have more crime than others. The questions will tap into the different schools of thinking such as psychological and sociological criminology, and environmental criminology. In CJ-3685, the questions will focus on different areas of law that the faculty consider important for students to know (e.g., the elements of a crime, aspects of legal search and seizure procedures).

The results of the pre- and post-test data collection will be analyzed at the end of the fall 2012 semester (i.e., once the post-tests have been collected). Based on the findings, the pre- and post-test instruments will be revised accordingly for the spring 2013 administration, and - more importantly - the instruction of key points and themes in those courses will be tweaked in advance of the upcoming semester.

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**Assessment of Student Learning**

**Students who graduate with a BA in Criminal Justice should be able to:**

**SLO1:** Understand the main principles of the United States Constitution, specifically related to individual rights and due process. (KU2, KU4, GE-V1, GE-V3, GE-V4)

Direct Measure 1: Pre- and post-test measures, in the form of required quizzes, will be administered in sections of the Substantive Criminal Law courses, CJ 3685, beginning in fall 2012. Student participation will be required and account for a small percentage of the overall grade. The quizzes will be designed to assess general knowledge of the law. Questions will focus on different areas of law that the faculty consider important for students to know (e.g., the elements of a crime, culpability of offenders, and elements related to criminal defense.

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Direct Measure 1: Pre- and post-test measures, in the form of required quizzes, will be administered in the introductory Criminal Justice course, CJ 2600, beginning in fall 2012. Student participation will be required and account for a small percentage of the overall grade. The quizzes will be designed to assess general knowledge of the criminal justice system, and the main components of corrections, courts, and police.

Direct Measure 2: An original instrument (Senior exam) was developed and administered in CJ 4600 in October 2011. The exam includes questions on causes and deterrents of crime.

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey completed in the capstone course: Senior Seminar.

SLO2: Identify the main components of the criminal justice system, and summarize the salient issues related to each component. (KU2, KU3, KU4, GE-S4, GE-V1, GE-V2, GE-V3, GE-V4, GE-V5)

Direct Measure 1: Pre- and post-test measures, in the form of required quizzes, will be administered in the introductory Criminal Justice course, CJ 2600, beginning in fall 2012. Student participation will be required and account for a small percentage of the overall grade. The quizzes will be designed to assess general knowledge of the criminal justice system, and the main components of corrections, courts, and police.

Direct Measure 2: An original instrument (Senior exam) was developed and administered in CJ 4600 in October 2011. The exam includes questions on the criminal justice system.

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey completed in the capstone course: Senior Seminar.

SLO3: Use theory to explain why people commit crimes and how offenders can be deterred. (KU3, KU4, GE-K2, GE-S4, GE-V1, GE-V2, GE-V3, GE-V4)

Direct Measure 1: Pre- and post-test measures, in the form of required quizzes, will be administered in the introductory Criminology course, CJ 2610, beginning in fall 2012. Student participation will be required and account for a small percentage of the overall grade. The quizzes will be designed to assess general knowledge of criminological theory; that is, why certain individuals do or do not commit crime, and why certain neighborhoods have more crime than others. The questions will tap into the different schools of thinking such as psychological and sociological criminology, and environmental criminology.

Direct Measure 2: An original instrument (Senior exam) was developed and administered in CJ 4600 in October 2011. The exam includes questions on the criminal justice system.

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey completed in the capstone course: Senior Seminar.

SLO4: Students will design and conduct an original research study on a topic related to the study of CJ. (KU 2, KU3, KU4, GE-K2, GE-S3, GE-S4, GE-S5, GE-V5)

Direct Measure 1: Term-long research paper, graded with a rubric, in CJ 4600 (Fall 2011).

Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey completed in the capstone course: Senior Seminar.

SLO5: Students will communicate effectively. (GE-S1, GE-S2, GE-V5)

Direct Measure 1: Oral presentation on research project, and the written research paper, assessed with rubrics in CJ 4600.
Indirect Measure: Graduating Student Survey completed in the capstone course, CJ 4600.

* KU Student Outcomes (KU):

  * Kean University graduates should be able to:

1. Think critically, creatively and globally;
2. Adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments;
3. Serve as active and contributing members of their communities; and
4. Advance their knowledge in the traditional disciplines (GE) and enhance their skills in professional areas

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Knowledge (GE-K): Students will demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and content by:

(K1) applying the scientific method to comprehend natural concepts and processes;
(K2) evaluating major theories and concepts in social sciences;
(K3) relating historical references to literature; and
(K4) evaluating major theories and concepts in the fine arts.

Skills (GE-S): Students will demonstrate the skills necessary to:

(S1) write to communicate and clarify learning;
(S2) communicate effectively through speech;
(S3) solve problems using quantitative reasoning;
(S4) think critically about concepts in multiple disciplines; and
(S5) show information literacy.

Values (GE-V): Students will demonstrate personal, social and ethical responsibility as a part of lifelong learning through:

(V1) personal responsibility;
(V2) ethical & social responsibility;
(V3) active in social & civic engagement;
(V4) respect for diverse culture; and
(V5) lifelong learning.

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