Master of Arts in Criminal Justice Assessment Plan

Program: MA in Criminal Justice
College of Business & Public Management
School of Criminal Justice & Public Administration
Dr. Patrick McManimon, Coordinator

Mission:
The Master of Arts in Criminal Justice Program at Kean University has several related goals that are aligned with the Mission of the Department of Criminal Justice. 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. The Master of Arts program adds depth to the students existing knowledge and provides students with the tools necessary to strengthen their analytical skills and theoretical understanding of the varied and diverse areas within the criminal justice student with the expectation of students contributing to the advancement of knowledge within the academy.

Assessment Process:

Graduate students have a combination of 5 foundation and 4 core courses to take as part of the requirements for the major. Students have a choice in completing a thesis (6 credits) or a comprehensive examination.

The foundation courses provide a sound backbone of the discipline with regard to the research and theoretical aspects of criminal justice with an emphasis on ethics within the system. The core courses are the primary vehicle for assessing the knowledge of our students in four concentrations; policing, corrections, law, and diversity. Beyond the 4 core courses, students take 3-4 other courses offered within our program, and it is likely that no two (or very few) majors take the exact same grouping of courses. Therefore, the faculty has agreed to center our assessment on the core knowledge of research and analysis, theory, ethical frameworks, and communication.

Each core course has assessment tools as part of the evaluation process; however, culminating assessment is done in comprehensive examinations or a thesis option. Each semester, composite data from student assignments will be collected and analyzed to address areas of program strengths and weaknesses and to inform our decisions ultimately resulting in program improvements.

The MA was formally introduced in the fall of Academic Year 2008-2009 as an alternative to the
MPA/CJ program, which had limited offerings in criminal justice and research. With the initial enrollment of fulltime students the following Academic Year, the program has seen substantial growth in 3 years. In the normal course sequencing of the program, the first group of graduating students will begin the process of assessment beginning in fall 2012 with the first comprehensive examinations and thesis to be submitted and assessed in spring 2013.

**Students who graduate with a MA in Criminal Justice are expected to:**

**SLO1:** Demonstrate in-depth theoretical knowledge of criminal justice. (KU4)

Direct measure: Comprehensive examination or thesis offered in final semester of student’s program.
Indirect measure: Theoretical connections to other content courses demonstrated through writing assignments and examinations, which include literature reviews and methodological design issues.

**SLO2:** Critically analyze criminal justice research and methods. (KU1)

Direct Measure: Students will submit individual papers that demonstrate knowledge of data collection and appropriate methodology.
Indirect Measure: Theoretical connections to other content courses demonstrated through writing assignments, presentations, and examinations, which include literature reviews and methodological design issues.

**SLO3:** Apply theoretical ethics frameworks to critical issues in the criminal justice system. (KU2, KU3)

Direct Measure: Students will be required to complete a written analysis of specific case relative to the course content.
Indirect Measure: Theoretical connections to other content courses demonstrated through writing assignments, presentations, and examinations.

**SLO4:** Effectively communicate, both orally and in writing, their understanding and analysis of criminal justice. (KU1)

Direct Measure: Demonstrate understanding of content courses in writing and using oral presentations.
Indirect Measure: Theoretical connections to other content courses demonstrated through writing assignments, presentations, and examinations, which include literature reviews and methodological design issues.
* KU Student Outcomes: *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 and enhance their skills in professional areas.