

Systematic Program Review

Name of Unit: Department of Criminal Justice
Reporting Official: S. George Vincentnathan, Chair

Item 1

Is your program (undergraduate, master's or doctoral program, academic support unit, service unit, center, administrative/staff department/unit) currently reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., annually, biennially, every 5 years)? Examples of systematic review include, but are not limited to: academic program review, internal audits, external accreditation, external review by a consultant, peer review, etc.

Yes No

If "YES", go to Item 2. If "NO", check that box and return form to OIRE.

Item 2

Type an "X" next to the type(s) of program review that applies to your unit, the date of your last review and the date of the next expected review:

	Date of last review	Date of next review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> academic program review	<u>Spring 05</u>	<u>Spring 06*</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> internal audit	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> external accrediting agency	_____	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> external consultant	<u>Spring 06*</u>	<u>N.A.</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> peer review	<u>Spring 05</u>	<u>Spring 06*</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	_____	_____

*Spring 06 data will be processed

Item 3

Describe how your unit has used/is using the findings/recommendations from its last review to improve the effectiveness of the unit. Include references to goals or objectives listed in recent planning documents, and examples of the use of assessment to improve your programs/services.

1. Assessment Results, Undergraduate Program, Spring 2005: The Educational Testing Service (ETS) instrument used for assessment Spring 2005 revealed that overall 70% of graduating seniors (52 students) received a score of 75% in the 7 areas of CJ (lumped together). This achievement is 5 percentage points higher than the expected 70%. They are theory, law, law-enforcement, corrections, courts, critical thinking, and research methods and statistics. In the areas of theory, critical thinking, and research methods/statistics, they did not do as well, to an expected 70% level.

Use of Results: In the criminology theory course the instructors introduced such changes as moving from simple to complex levels of logic, using social and behavioral science concepts and theories, on which the criminological theories are founded.

In promoting critical thinking, instructors in all classes increased debates, discussions, and critical analyses of topics. Students interviewed employees of the CJ system, and learned to appreciate and differentiate or integrate field and theoretical perspectives. Various assignments were given to promote critical thinking. Data sets were presented for comparison, critical analysis, integration or rejection. In many classes, papers were assigned to help students analyze issues and viewpoints. Also students were exposed to international comparisons and diverse manifestations of crime and CJ issues. In the Capstone class seniors evaluated their learning, and learned to integrate it. They also provided critical

evaluation of the curriculum.

Two instructors responsible for teaching research methods and statistics have introduced research projects in which students learn to do research subsequent to their understanding of the field in the classroom. Both individual and group projects were assigned and carried out. For instance, students developed questionnaires for surveys, critically evaluated them, made modifications, collected responses, and statistically analyzed them, and came up with data-based decisions for applied use. This will be continued. Plans are underway to reduce the size of research methods classes, so that personal attention and research experience can be augmented.

The above assessment results and their use relate to:

- UTPA Goal: Ensure undergraduate student access and success.
- Unit Goal, CJ Department: Introduce improvements in teaching, learning, and curriculum at the undergraduate level, based on assessment of student learning outcomes.

2. Assessment Results, Graduate Program, Spring 2005: The 2004-05 assessment revealed that 100% of the students received 80% or higher scores, above the expectation that 80% would receive such scores. The faculty were satisfied, but felt the students needed greater preparation in critical thinking, policy-oriented thinking, and writing skills.

In June 2006 an external reviewer examined the program and submitted a report. The report reveals that the program is very solid and good. There were some suggestions for change in the manner in which the program is constituted, especially in reference to requirements for graduation, which will be discussed in the faculty meetings for consideration.

Use of Results: Improvements were made by increasing opportunities for discussion, critical analysis of topics, and development of policy-oriented thinking. The graduate instructors report that in all classes they have encouraged students' points of view and alternate ways of thinking. In the graduate research methods class, especially, students learned to critically evaluate research findings, and the use of different research methods for different purposes, and to achieve informed understanding of a problem or issue. There were an increased number of written assignments, class presentations, and student participation and discussions.

The above assessment results and their use relate to:

- UTPA Goal: Enhance graduate education and research.
- Unit Goal, CJ Department: Introduce improvements in teaching, learning, and curriculum at the graduate level, based on assessment of student learning outcomes.

3. Assessment Results, Faculty and Student Research, Spring 2005: The faculty's accomplishments increased greatly. In 2004-05 they had 5 publications and 12 presentations. In 2005-06 they had 12 publications and 10 presentations. In addition assessment and internship related research was carried out. 8 senior undergrad students were also involved in various research projects. The faculty/student research initiative was promoted to help undergraduate students choose graduate education.

Use of Results: Although this is a significant improvement, the CJ faculty intend to continue improving in these areas, and also involve students in various research projects to help them prepare for graduate education.

The above assessment results and their use relate to:

- UTPA Goals:
 - 1. Enhance undergraduate student access and success.
 - 2. Enhance graduate education and research.
- Unit Goal, CJ Department: Increase research, scholarship, and creative activities.