

Initial Program Report

Academic Unit/Department:
Criminal Justice Policy

Undergraduate or Graduate:
Graduate

Department Chair:
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Program Director:
Erin Heil

Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the Initial Program Report:
Erin Heil and Kevin Cannon

Response Date:
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The following template is intended to be a guide for the initial program report. Please key your responses to the outline. When appended material is necessary and/or appropriate, please label the appended material with then letter of the item.

- (a) Describe the viability of the program including (1) application and enrollment data, (2) student credit hour production, (3) faculty load, and (4) resource allocation**

In terms of enrollment data, we had 22 students in 2018, 31 in 2019, 45 in 2020. We had 4 people graduate in 2020. At the end of Fall 2020, our students' average GPA was 3.36. Between 2019 and September of 2021, we have accepted 53 students into the program. In general, students are taking 2-3 courses per term, with 3-4 faculty teaching either one or two classes each semester. The program is currently operating with the resources allocated by the NUI. If the program experiences significant enrollment growth, we would need additional class sections to be offered.

- (b) Outline progress made toward Program Contributions described in the Request for a New Unit of Instruction Form. (question 8)**

In our original proposal for the program, we argued that the Online Master's in Criminal Justice Policy complements the University's commitment to improving career prospects for individuals living and

working in the southwest Illinois region, and looking to draw from the bi-state region (Illinois and Missouri), particularly with this online proposal. Graduates of the Online Master's program will find enhanced career opportunities in local, state, and federal agencies serving the criminal justice community, as well as in their privatized counterparts in all sectors of the economy, but especially the service industry. In order to understand the need for an Online Master's in Criminal Justice, we first considered the current market of master's programs in criminal justice that are completely available online within the bi-state region. The bi-state region was chosen as the market point because research has shown that: About 80% of online students live within 100 miles of a campus or service center of the institution they attend, and the large majority live within 50 miles. Geographic proximity is a major advantage in attracting online students. Furthermore, among all the institutions that respondents considered during their college search, the farthest institution they considered was often located less than 50 miles from where they resided (Aslanian and Clinefekter, 2012, p. 14).

The Online Master's in Criminal Justice Policy contributes by "increasing the number of people with high-quality post-secondary credentials to ensure the state [of Illinois] has an educated workforce and engaged citizenry."(The Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success, accessed April 14, 2015, from www.ibhe.org/masterPlanning/materials/070109_PublicAgenda.pdf.) The Online Program's incorporation of competency based prior learning assessment help meets the demands of Illinois' economy.

To determine student need and interest, we assessed in three ways: surveys of SIUE Criminal Justice alumni; surveys of criminal justice agencies in the bi-state area; and a survey conducted by SIUE ITS. We will first describe the surveys of alumni and criminal justice agencies. For the alumni survey, we reached out to alumni currently in federal positions, county, municipal, and state law enforcement, correctional workers, probation officers, social service employees, those working in the courts or legal field, etc. We utilized our existing databases, compiled from our senior assignment and assessment exit forms. In those forms, we ask students to share e-mail contact information post-graduation so we can follow-up with them to determine their career path. We then developed a survey utilizing Survey Monkey, and sent it to 278 alumni. The survey (after accounting for addresses that "bounced") was sent to 250 individuals, and we received a response rate of 46% (115/250). We had e-mail responses from alumni after they completed the survey asking "when will you start this?", and "my agency is willing to pay for my master's degree". For the criminal justice agency survey (also distributed through Survey Monkey), we utilized the agencies with whom Criminal Justice Policy has contracts for placement of our students for our CJ 488,

Supervised Internship course, which functions as our Senior Assignment. We identified 88 agencies, and again after accounting for “bounced” e-mail addresses, the survey was sent to 81 such agencies. We received a response rate of 37% (30/81). We were pleased with both survey response rates. Results support our anecdotal feedback in the following ways.

Alumni Results: Of those surveyed, 18.4% went on to graduate school, attending 15 different Universities (McKendree; University of Missouri – St Louis; University of Illinois at Springfield; University of Michigan; Northeastern Illinois University; Lindenwood University; University of Missouri – Kansas City; Adams State University; Saint Louis University; SIU Carbondale (2); SIU Edwardsville (3); Arizona State University; Webster University; Georgia Regents University; and Henley-Putnam University). For those students attending graduate school, their course of study concentrated on Criminal Justice and Criminology; Public Administration; Clinical Mental Health; International Relations; and Intelligence Management. For those who attended graduate school, 36.3% were employed full-time while completing their program of study. We would note that offering a Criminal Justice Master’s degree here at SIUE would not seem to “steal” students already attending here or at Carbondale. Instead it would add students to our enrollment.

We then asked them whether they would have chosen to come to SIUE for an online Master’s in Criminal Justice rather than the degree/school they pursued, and 50% would have chosen SIUE instead. In assessing their interest, 72.2% (78) individuals would be interested in attending SIUE for an online Criminal Justice Master’s degree; 63.9% (69) would attend SIUE if we offered a hybrid Criminal Justice Master’s degree; and interestingly 73.2% (79) would also attend SIUE for a traditional Criminal Justice Master’s degree. Finally, 64.5% (60) of those individuals believed their professional career would be enhanced by completion of a Master’s degree. Specifically, 60.5% believed a Master’s would assist them with career advancement; 25% believed it would allow them to further their knowledge and education; and 7% stated that they would come back to SIUE because of the professors in our program (an answer we did not actually expect). Other reasons included low cost (2.8%), and convenience (1.4%). Interest is quite strong for an online and/or hybrid Master’s program here at SIUE in Criminal Justice Policy.

Criminal Justice Agency Results: We targeted the criminal justice agencies with a slightly different set of questions. However, we included a question asking if the responding party from that agency would be interested in attending a Master’s program, and the response was 46.7% yes. Then we moved on to how, or if, the creation of some type of Master’s program in Criminal Justice would be beneficial to their employees. A majority (63.3%) responded that the completion of a

master's degree would provide enhanced promotional opportunities within their agency. Completing that degree would result in a salary bump/increase in 23.3% of the agencies responding to the survey. However, a smaller portion (13.3%), would consider paying for employees to achieve a Master's degree.

When looking to the type of program to be offered, 58.6% of the agencies would prefer a hybrid model, while 20.7% would prefer an online model. Only 10.3% would prefer the traditional Master's program in a classroom setting. 70% indicated that there were benefits to an online program. The agencies were asked to identify those benefits, and they identified time management, flexibility (particularly for those with shift work, a common structure for law enforcement agencies), accessibility, and convenience (meaning no lost time in commuting to the University campus). In assessing potential emphasis areas, agencies identified real world applications, terrorism, corrections (including community corrections with probation and parole), administration, management, leadership, and criminology in general. These areas were helpful to us later as we envisioned what the Criminal Justice Master's degree at SIUE would look like.

SIUE ITS Market Analysis: SIUE ITS also undertook a market analysis for a variety of proposed programs, including Criminal Justice. That study found that Criminology ranked as the number 8 bachelor program in the St. Louis Metro Area, with 305 degrees awarded in 2012-2013. It further found that the discipline ranked number 10 in Illinois' top 20 bachelor's degrees, with 1552 degrees awarded in the same academic year. The information concerning bachelor degrees is important for this proposal as these students, once employed, are potential targets for an Online Master's program. This means there is a steady stream of potential program targets each year. Coupled with those findings is that master's degrees in criminal justice are not listed in the top 20 in either geographical location, but are found in the top 20 of national online Universities. Therefore this New Unit of Instruction will allow Illinois, and specifically SIUE, to move into that niche where it does not currently exist, and do so at a much more affordable option, as SIUE online tuition is among the lowest in the state, and much lower than for-profit online university programs. SIUE ITS found that masters in criminal justice degrees offered online from top online competitors (University of Cincinnati; Michigan State University; and University of Phoenix) cost \$739, \$675, and \$740 per credit hour respectively. Since students state that cost is the single most important factor when deciding upon higher education, SIUE is well situated to enter the Online Master's in Criminal Justice Policy market.

The SIUE ITS study found surveyed prospective and enrolled online undergraduate and graduate students within Illinois and contiguous states, and found that 45% pursued a graduate degree to update their skills/knowledge; 31% to obtain a promotion at their current location, or to find a different or promotional opportunity at a different employer. This information is consistent with our alumni survey results. The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) predicts that almost 45% of enrollment will be non-traditional (with students at 25 years and older, and working). This New Unit of Instruction allows Illinois and the Metro East area residents to opt to for a local online program with known contacts in the immediate area to target these exact working professionals.

Existing Local Online Program Review: We also analyzed the local market for online program options. Based on a review of the top twenty online graduate programs in Criminal Justice (as determined by the Best School List, composited on “the quality of the program, the types of courses offered, the faculty, ranking, awards, and reputation” (www.thebstschools.org, accessed June, 2014), we reviewed the existing programs and developed a list of all universities in Illinois and Missouri that offer either a traditional, hybrid, or online graduate degree in criminal justice Policy or a related subfield (e.g. criminology, law enforcement administration, etc.). From that list, those that offered an entirely online graduate program in criminal justice or related subfield were examined.

In Illinois, there are seven universities that offer a graduate degree in criminal justice or related subfield: East-West University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Lewis University, Robert Morris University Illinois, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and University of Illinois Chicago. Of those institutions, only one offers an online graduate degree, which is Lewis University, a private Roman Catholic university in Romeoville, Illinois. The online graduate degree Lewis University offers is a Master’s degree in criminal/social justice.

In Missouri, there are eleven institutions that offer a graduate degree in criminal justice or related subfield: Lindenwood University, Missouri Baptist University, Missouri Southern State University, Missouri State University-Springfield, Missouri Western State University, St. Louis University, Southeast Missouri State University, University of Central Missouri, University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Missouri-St. Louis, and Webster University. Of those institutions, five offer an online Master’s degree in criminal justice or related subfield. Missouri Baptist University offers an online Master’s degree in criminal justice. Partnering universities Missouri Southern State University and Southeast Missouri State University offer an online master’s degree in criminal justice. Missouri State University offers an online master’s degree in criminology, and University of Central Missouri offers an online master’s degree in criminal justice.

The required courses and general requirements for graduation at each of the institutions that offer an online graduate degree in criminal justice were reviewed. Lewis University requires courses in criminal justice administration and management, criminal justice agencies, fair practices, and law, in addition to theory and research methods. In Missouri, at the various institutions, courses range from a traditional graduate program (methods, theory, statistics...) to more customized programs tailored towards careers (evidence, police innovations, legal aspects, emergency response...). All of the universities require a thesis or capstone project. Only one university, Southeast Missouri State University, offers an internship option in addition to a thesis or capstone project. With the thesis or capstone project, the required credit hours for graduation ranged from 30-36 total credit hours.

Based upon this review, the existing gap in the market for online criminal justice policy graduate programs is both geographic and program type, which we are prepared to meet. With the exception of Missouri Baptist University, none of the universities currently offering an online criminal justice Master's degree is within close proximity to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). Therefore, SIUE would not be competing with other institutions for those students choosing an online program because of close proximity to their residence. In addition to geography, not one of the institutions researched for this grant offer an online graduate degree in Criminal Justice Policy. Offering a degree that is unique from criminal justice studies, criminology, or criminal/social justice will not only attract those students within close proximity, but also those students wishing to obtain a more policy oriented graduate degree throughout the bi-state region. We do not see the need to lose these potential students to for-profit institutions, which the IBHE shows to have increased student counts by 0.4% (www.ibhe.state.il.us/CollegesandUniversities/default.htm, accessed April 14, 2015). As of Fall 2013, Illinois had a low percentage of online graduate enrollment in general (0% to 13.9% across 5 Illinois Universities) (SIUE ITS). This strengthens our request to tap into this market.

Based on our enrollment data, we have found that the online graduate program in criminal justice policy provides SIUE with a strong market share in the region. We believe that this program is unique in comparison to the already existing programs of criminal justice, criminology, and criminal/social justice. Based on the electives that we offer, as well the option between a thesis, a capstone project, and exit exam, we believe that the students we target, existing criminal justice professionals, have been able to tailor the program to their career and career goals.

(c) Provide evidence of student learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement described in the Request for a New Unit of Instruction Form (question 10)

According to question 10 in the New Unit of Instruction, the faculty will assess the success of the program using the following measures:

- Percent of graduates employed in the field
- Career advancement achieved by program graduates
- Employer satisfaction with the graduates of the program
- Percent of graduates utilizing the PLA component

Based on information collected via a close ended survey, we found the following regarding the measures of success in our program. In terms of graduates employed in the field of criminal justice, 67% are currently employed. 100% of our current students plan to work in the field of criminal justice studies. 33% believe that that graduate degree will provide them some sort of career advancement. Finally, 44% believe that their employer is satisfied with the knowledge gained in their graduate career.

In terms of the PLA component, we have had three (3) students interested in the PLA component, but have not yet completed this option. However, two of the three students are newly admitted students to the program, and may eventually utilize the PLA component. The third student did not feel he had been at his position in his agency long enough to put together a comprehensive PLA portfolio. We believe that this option is still important to current students currently employed in the field of criminal justice, as well as those that may be admitted in the future.

(d) Discuss the progress made toward Program Outcomes described in the Request for a New Unit of Instruction Form. (question 11)

According to question 11 in the Request for a New Unit of Instruction Form:

“SIUE offers an Online Master’s in Criminal Justice Policy. This unique online program targets the advanced study of criminal justice policy and practice, including analysis of controversial issues and possible future practices to working criminal justice professionals in the courts, corrections, and law enforcement areas. A strong foundation in theory and methods will be combined with innovative criminal justice initiatives and focus areas. The program also offers real world experience with a capstone project option targeting the needs of the where the study currently works, and recognizes the value of such experience with the option of prior learning assessment. Graduates of the online master’s program in criminal justice policy use their degree as a stepping stone to

new careers or for advancement in professional positions that serve the criminal justice community and the public at large.

ADMISSION: Applications are reviewed by an Admissions Committee composed of graduate faculty in criminal justice studies. Admission is competitive and the committee will evaluate each applicant on the bases of the following:

- Application letter (not more than 2 pages);
- Undergraduate GPA (minimum 2.5 on 4.0 scale);
- 2 letters of recommendation (can both be from undergraduate faculty, or one can be from current worksite);
- GPA in prior coursework in criminal justice or criminology;
- Current or prior employment in criminal justice (optional);
- Letter of recommendation from employer (optional);
- GRE score (optional).

The application letter should describe the student's reasons for applying and expectations upon graduation. It should include specific qualifications and a description of relevant professional experiences. Applications are due by April 1. Applicants will be notified of the Admission Committee's decision no later than May 10.

COURSE OF STUDY: The two year program offers graduation in five consecutive semesters of classes. Each cohort would begin in the fall semester. Students are required to take 15 credits of required core credits, 15 credits of electives, and 6 thesis or capstone credit hours, for a total of 36 hours.

Required Core Courses

- CJ 502 Applied research in criminal justice
- CJ 505 Criminological Theory
- CJ 513 Criminal Justice Statistics
- CJ 515 Criminal Justice Planning and Budgeting
- CJ 517 Policy Analysis
- CJ 598 Capstone I and II OR
- CJ 599 Thesis I and II

Elective Courses

- CJ 508 Disparate Treatment in the Criminal Justice System
- CJ 527 Cybercrime
- CJ 528 Civil liability
- CJ 529 Human trafficking
- CJ 535 Seminar in Juvenile Justice
- CJ 540 Seminar in Correctional theory and practice
- CJ 590 Special topics
- CJ 596 Readings in criminal justice policy

Existing Senior Level Courses that could be taken for Graduate Credit:

- CJ 408 Critical Issues in Law Enforcement
- CJ 410 Judicial Process in criminal cases
- CJ 420 United States Drug Policy
- CJ 464 Criminal justice and the mental health system
- CJ 465 Theories of a Just Society

Based on our credit requirement and the stated courses, the following program structure results:

Table 1: Program Structure

1st Year Fall	1st Year Spring	Summer	2nd Year Fall	2nd Year Spring
Required	Required		Required	Required
Applied Research	Criminal Justice Statistics		Criminal justice planning and budgeting	Policy analysis
Crime Theory			Thesis I or Capstone I	Thesis II or Capstone II
Electives (500 Level)	Electives (500 Level)	Electives (500 Level)	Electives (500 Level)	Electives (500 Level)
Correctional theory and practice	Disparate Treatment	Cybercrime	Civil liability	Juvenile justice
Electives (400 Level)	Electives (400 Level)	Electives (400 Level)	Electives (400 Level)	Electives (400 Level)
Critical Issues in Law Enforcement	Judicial Process	Criminal justice and the mental health system	U.S. Drug Policy	Theories of a Just Society

Because the 400 level electives are already being offered in the physical classroom at SIUE, students can choose take the 400 level elective classes on campus or take the 500 level electives online. All of the required courses will be online. With this format, students can customize their graduate degree to an entire online program or a hybrid program allowing for some physical classroom time. We will be in compliance with the Graduate School's requirement of the number of hours which must be at the 500 level.

We will also incorporate Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) into the online graduate program. Given that some of the courses we will offer could, and most likely be, material that the practitioner has learned in the field, we would allow an opportunity to assess the student based on his/her prior learning. Some of the courses we would consider for PLA credit would be policy analysis, planning and budgeting, civil liability, correctional theory and practice, as well as elective courses, special topics, and readings in criminal justice. This would require that we create a Criminal Justice

graduate special topics course, and a Criminal Justice graduate directed readings course. The assessment tool we would use for PLA credit would be a portfolio project. The amount of course credit available through the PLA option is 3 credit hours. Incorporating PLA into our program puts us at the forefront of such programs, as the work completed by SIUE Criminal Justice Policy faculty for a prior Provost's Grant (2013) determined that very few criminal justice programs had yet utilized the PLA approach. Since our program targets working professionals, the PLA component is an excellent fit.

The implementation of an online master's program would require the existing Criminal Justice program to offer 9 new courses each calendar year. Given our market analysis we believe there will be a strong demand for an online graduate program in Criminal Justice Policy. We envision capping each cohort at a capacity of 25. Assuming that students would be able to complete the program in the 5 consecutive semesters as outlined above, this would require student to take an average of 7.2 hours per semester.

Exit Requirements: The 6 hour capstone project or thesis project culminates in one of the following two exit alternatives: 1. The capstone project option is geared towards the working professional. The student would propose a policy, procedure, or program development that would benefit his/her home agency, while incorporating the knowledge learned in the Online Master's program. This proposal would need to be approved by a committee composed of three faculty members. Once the capstone project is completed, the student would record and upload a presentation to Blackboard collaborate or similar software in use at the time, and then the presentation would be placed on streaming server. The committee of three faculty members would then be able to view the presentation in the capstone course shell via the link housed on the streaming server. 2. The thesis project option is envisioned to be a traditional research paper. The topic of the thesis would be approved by a committee of three faculty members. The final thesis would be uploaded and defended to the committee of three faculty members online via Skype or other appropriate technology."

The department of criminal just policy has successfully offered all of the courses outlined in question 11 in the Request for a New Unit of Instruction form. In the initiation of the program, we hired a tenure track faculty member to assist with the graduate course offerings. We also have hired two instructors to teach undergraduate courses that were being displaced because of graduate course offerings. Because of that, we have been able to successfully offer the initially planned courses each semester.

One drawback that we have experienced is that the limited number of graduate faculty that we currently have does not meet the demand of the

number of students that are currently in the program or newly admitted into the program. In the fall of 2020, we had 45 registered graduate students; 32 in the fall of 2021. With the rotating enrollment that we have put into place, our required courses reach capacity at the beginning of registration. This leaves newly admitted students without course offerings towards the degree. Because of this dilemma, we have added to our course offerings allowing for any Public Administration and Policy Analysis (PAPA) 400- or 500-level course to be accepted as an elective credit. This addition to our course offerings has allowed students to complete their elective requirements if they are unable to enroll in a required course. We have also streamlined the program outcomes by offering a third exit option (See question e for details). This exit option has made it more accessible for students wishing to complete the program in one year to do so.

(e) Describe any major changes in the program/disciplinary context since initial approval

The program was initially approved as both a one-year track program and a two-year program. Faculty learned that it was difficult for students to complete the program within one year with the exit requirements of thesis or capstone. Therefore, in the Spring of 2021, we were approved to offer a third exit option, which was a comprehensive exit exam. This expedites the graduation in the one-year time frame, and is directed towards those students that intend to use their graduate degree for job advancement. To complete the program using the exit exam option, students must receive a passing grade on a comprehensive exit examination. Students must submit two papers written during their course work as evidence of their writing skills and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the criminal justice policy core courses in order to qualify to take the final comprehensive examination. We first offered the exit exam in the Summer of 2021, and had 9 students successfully pass the exam and graduate that term. Currently we have two students taking the exit exam this semester (Fall 2021).

We have also reduced the number of credit hours required for graduation from 36 to 30. Under the new credit requirements, the capstone or thesis option may be taken for 3 hours or 6 hours. If the student selects the 3 hour option, they will take 27 hours of other programs courses. If they select the 6 hour option, they will take 24 hours of other program courses. For the exit exam, we offer two options; a general exam and a directed exam. If the student chooses to take the general exam, the student may do so with 30 credit hours of other program courses prior to taking the exam. If the student selects the directed exit exam option, they will take 3 hours of CJ 596, Readings in Criminal Justice, and 27 hours of other program courses. The exam

topics will be directed by working with a Criminal Justice faculty member.

(f) Discuss any actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resource and practices, and curricular changes

As a result of this review, we plan to take all comments under discussion with the graduate faculty members. We believe that this review is beneficial in strengthening our program as it continues to develop in the upcoming years. At this point, we do not see a need for curricular changes, but if this is addressed in the review, we will also take that under consideration.