

**Program-Level Assessment Plan (Academic)**

**Program/Division:** BS Criminal Justice

**DATE:** July 26, 2018

**Evaluators:** Patrick McGrain, Ph.D., Criminal Justice Program Coordinator

**2017 University Learning Outcomes:** ULO1 Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; ULO2 Intellectual and Practical Skills; ULO3 Personal and Social Responsibility, ULO4 Integrative and Applied Learning; ULO5 Immersed in the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

**2017-18 Program Outcomes:** PLO 1 – Explain and apply criminological theory; PLO 2 – Negative effects of the CJ system on minorities; PLO 3 – Analyze ethical decisionmaking; PLO 4 – Identify philosophies of corrections; PLO 5 –Procedures and policies of criminal investigation; PLO 6 – Analysis of the legal system

**ASSESSMENT RESEARCH QUESTION:** What do current assessment indicators reveal about the status of the Criminal Justice program?

**ASSESSMENT HYPOTHESIS:** The Criminal Justice program is well-rounded and prepares its graduates for success in a variety of justice-related careers.

University Learning Outcomes ( <i>Directions: List ULO #s that align with identified PLOs</i> )	Program Learning Outcomes	Key Courses that ensure that this objective is met.	Evidence ( <i>Example: Direct Evidence :Journal Entry or Indirect Evidence: Response to Graduate Survey Question #3</i> )	Assessment Practice ( <i>Example Rubric applied to random sample of Final Projects</i> )	Assessment RESULTS ( <i>Example: 35 out of 50 students Met or Exceeded Standards on Applied Rubric</i> )	Benchmark ( <i>Example: 75% Meet/Exceed Standard</i> )	MET/ NOT MET/ IN PROCESS	Changes made as a result of this assessment finding
<b>ULO1</b> Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical & Natural World	<b>PLO 1</b> <b>PLO 2</b> <b>PLO 4</b>	CRJ 216	Research Paper Class Presentation Midterm and Final Examination	Research paper rubric Class presentation rubric Examination grades	75% students meeting or exceeding the standard	93% of students met or exceeded the standard	Met	None
<b>ULO2</b> Intellectual and Practical Skills	<b>PLO 5</b> <b>PLO 6</b>	CRJ 216	Research Paper Class Presentation	Research paper rubric Class presentation rubric Examination grades	75% students meeting or exceeding the standard	48% of students met the writing standard; 100% met the presentation standard	Not Met	Additional research instruction; Additional writing assignments will be implemented and edited for style and content
<b>ULO3</b> Personal & Social Responsibility	<b>PLO 2</b> <b>PLO 3</b>	CRJ 216	Research Paper Class Presentation Midterm and Final Examination	Research paper rubric Class presentation rubric Examination grades	75% students meeting or exceeding the standard	93% of students met or exceeded the standard	Met	None
<b>ULO 4</b> Integrative & Applied Learning	<b>PLO 3</b> <b>PLO 5</b>	CRJ 216	Research Paper Class Presentation	Research paper rubric Class presentation rubric Examination grades	75% students meeting or exceeding the standard	48% of students met the writing standard; 100% met the presentation standard	Not Met	Additional research instruction; Additional writing assignments will be implemented and edited for style and content
<b>ULO5</b> Immersed in the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas	<b>PLO 2</b> <b>PLO 4</b>	CRJ 216	Research Paper Class Presentation Midterm and Final Examination	Research paper rubric Class presentation rubric Examination grades	75% students meeting or exceeding the standard	93% of students met or exceeded the standard	Met	None

**Selected KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Insert others as appropriate):**

<b>Program Enrollment</b> <i>(#Freshman; #Transfer, External; #Transfer, Internal)</i>	<b>Retention Rate</b>	<b>Programmatic Honors</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>	<b>Exit Survey Results</b>	<b>Employment/Graduate School Rate</b>
2017-18 Criminal Justice Program Enrollment: 63	92% (23 out of 25) of students new to the Criminal Justice program in 2016-17 have been retained.	6 students were inducted into Alpha Phi Sigma, the Criminal Justice Honor Society.	17 students earned a Criminal Justice degree in 2017.	Students scored 60% on the cumulative exit exam	2017 Criminal Justice Graduates: 65% (11 out of 17) students employed in a CJ-related position or in a graduate program
15 students entered as first-time freshmen into Criminal Justice in 2017	93% (14 out of 15) of first-time Criminal Justice freshmen were retained in the program. 100% were retained at Gwynedd Mercy.				
10 students transferred in Criminal Justice from University Studies or another major	64% (14 out of 22) of students entering the Criminal Justice program in 2013 as first-time freshmen were retained in the Criminal Justice program to graduation.				

**Executive Summary of FINDINGS/RESULTS:** Overall, the Criminal Justice curriculum offers students a complete look at the system, including both theoretical and practical applications. Students leave Gwynedd Mercy with the knowledge of all actors associated with the system and the operation of each organizational unit (i.e., courts, corrections, law enforcement, offenders, victims). The fact that a majority of our graduates obtain jobs in their chosen field is a testament to their interest in utilizing their education to enter a career they have studied several years to thoroughly understand. This is a source of pride for the instructors in the program; we see our students as the new generation of criminal justice professionals, and are proud that they have chosen to stay on this career path.

Our retention rate is something that we are extremely proud of. Losing an average of 2 students per year, most often to financial difficulties, is a testament to our well-rounded program that students seem to really enjoy. Additionally, several students qualify for induction into Alpha Phi Sigma, the Criminal Justice national Honor Society, every year. Finally, our employment and graduate school rate is evidence that our students are enjoying their education and are interested in making a career in the field of Criminal Justice.

Conversely, there are some evaluative results that are disconcerting. First and foremost, students in the Criminal Justice program struggle to become proficient writers before they graduate. Therefore, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on writing and presentation skills throughout the curriculum. Additionally, students are not adept in carrying over skills and information from one class to the next. One specific type of assessment we have started in Criminal Justice is the assessment of student improvement over time. Utilizing questions created for the ETS Major Field Test, students are asked to complete a 75-question examination, testing their knowledge on several aspects of the Criminal Justice system. Most of the questions require knowledge of specific terms and situations, and ask students to explain concepts and ideas they have learned in the curriculum, interpret data, and apply theory to the operation of the various components of the system and its myriad relationships. Students are given the 75-question test twice during their tenure in the CRJ program – once at the beginning of their freshman year, and once during their senior year. In most cases, they take the test within the first 2 weeks of CRJ 102 (Introduction to Criminal Justice), and again 4 years later in their CRJ 4000 (Capstone) course.

The first wave of data for the graduating class (2014-2018) was collected in Fall, 2014. Overall, the students answered approximately 30% of the questions correctly, with a median score of 25. When given the test 4 years later, the students scored an average of 60%, with a median score of 58, both slightly above the scores from the first cohort (2013-1017). As with the data from the previous year, there are several conclusions that can be drawn from this first wave. First, it is entirely possible that the students did not put forth a solid effort when completing the final exam. Anecdotal evidence (i.e., conversations with students) suggests that students simply did not try to answer the questions honestly and correctly, because they were not receiving a grade for the test. Second, and perhaps more problematic, is that the students are simply struggling with the curriculum and are not truly achieving the student learning outcomes.

**NEXT STEPS:** Two changes will be made during AY2018-19, with the expectation that student writing and comprehensive learning will improve. First, several courses will now offer additional research instruction, both by the instructor and the library staff. As we have seen in the senior Capstone course (CRJ 4000), student understanding of research can be enhanced by offering them instruction in a setting different from the classroom. To this end, mandatory sessions will be created in order to offer students additional guidance in completing research. Students do not grasp the necessity for a thorough research process; the goal is to give them such an education, so that they begin to understand how research can and will inform their decisionmaking in the criminal justice system. Additionally, students will now be expected to write more frequently in their Criminal Justice courses. Currently, only 25% of the Criminal Justice courses require research and writing of any real significance, and the majority of these are offered by one professor. The expectation is that at least 50% of the courses offered during the AY2018-19 will include a significant writing assignment, giving students the opportunity to hone their skills as writers and researchers. With the guidance from their instructors, students will start to appreciate the intricacies of research and writing, and how it is applied to criminal justice topics.

The second change to be made this year is the addition of Assistant Professor, Dr. Lorraine Phillips. Dr. Phillips brings an expertise in the study of victimology and immigration, and will be offering courses that force students to think and write critically about topics relevant to criminal justice and the larger society. The addition of a doctorally-trained professional will allow for a broader range of topics for research, and additionally writing responsibilities for the students. With the opportunity to have their work edited and critiqued several times throughout the semester, students will understand what “good” writing looks like, and how they can work to make themselves more proficient in their written communications.

Regarding the exit survey results, the next step is to analyze the questions, categorizing them by course type. This is something that will be done to examine in which courses the students are retaining information, and in which courses they are struggling to understand the concepts. At that point, the Program Coordinator can work with individual instructors to ensure that a full complement of terms, models, and theories are being covered in the respective courses. It will be interesting to see how a new full-time faculty member (1 full-time, 1 adjunct), and the shuffling of current adjunct offerings, will affect the 4-year outcome.

From a programmatic stance, an assessment schedule has been created for AY2018-19, allowing Program Coordinators to evaluate the required and “important” courses, to determine whether the courses meet the University and Program Learning Outcomes; the assessment practices utilized; the assessment results; and whether the students reach a benchmark of 75% success rate.