

# Institutional Effectiveness Report

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## Assessment Summary

**Department or Division:** Sociology, Criminal Justice, Anthropology and Marriage and Family Therapy

**Degree Program:** MSCJ

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**Assessment Cycle** (academic or calendar year): 2007-2008

**Mission** (related to VSU mission):

*It is the mission of the MSCJ program...*

- *To develop an understanding of major criminological theories, their strengths and weaknesses, their role in explaining crime and delinquency, and their role in informing public policy.*
- *To develop a familiarity with the structure and function of systems of criminal justice in the United States and in other countries.*
- *To develop the use and application of scientific research methods to the study of crime as well as to solving crimes.*
- *Integrate criminal justice theory and research findings with criminal justice practice.*
- *To develop an understanding of the development of contemporary criminal justice issues in modern societies and how such issues may be informed by systematic research and analysis.*

**Assessment History** (discuss here how and when the program developed its current assessment program, what it used prior to starting that program to assess its effectiveness, etc.):

*Comprehensive Exams and Theses were utilized from the inception of the program until Spring 2002, at which time the format for Area Papers were reconstructed to replace the need for Comprehensive Exams.*

*Assessment methods prior to this change read:*

- *The use of systematic analysis of student examinations and research papers from courses;*
- *Periodic uses of surveys of students or alumni from the program;*
- *The use of comprehensive examinations for students and an analysis of their performance;*
- *To the extent possible, baseline data from other comparable programs in the university will be compared to data based on students in the program;*
- *Program faculty will meet regularly to assess courses and student performance;*
- *Program faculty will review all theses and area papers written in a given assessment period and evaluate related student performance.*

Since the change, in 2002, assessment methods have remained unchanged with the exception of the omission of the third bulleted item above, to wit,

- *The use of systematic analysis of student examinations and research papers from courses;*
- *Periodic uses of surveys of students or alumni from the program;*
- *To the extent possible, baseline data from other comparable programs in the university will be compared to data based on students in the program;*
- *Program faculty will meet regularly to assess courses and student performance;*
- *Program faculty will review all theses and area papers written in a given assessment period and evaluate related student performance.*

*In January of 2004, faculty met and agreed that, based on changing student needs and to better address academic standards and the needs of the field, changes would be undertaken regarding curriculum. Those changes consisted of a reworking of the curriculum in CRJU 7000, Criminal Justice Administration, and the migration of CRJU7370, Ethical and Legal Issues, and CRJU7413, Criminal Justice Planning and Evaluation, to the core from classification as elective courses.*

### **Expected Student Learning Outcomes:**

*In keeping with the generally stated mission of the MSCJ Program, the expected student outcomes are as follows:*

- *To develop an understanding of major criminological theories, their strengths and weaknesses, their role in explaining crime and delinquency, and their role in informing public policy.*
- *To develop a familiarity with the structure and function of systems of criminal justice in the United States and in other countries.*
- *To develop the use and application of scientific research methods to the study of crime as well as to solving crimes.*
- *Integrate criminal justice theory and research findings with criminal justice practice.*
- *To develop an understanding of the development of contemporary criminal justice issues in modern societies and how such issues may be informed by systematic research and analysis.*

### **Assessments (include when and to whom these are administered, and align goals with specific assessments):**

- *The use of systematic analysis of student examinations and research papers from courses;*
- *Periodic uses of surveys of students or alumni from the program;*
- *To the extent possible, baseline data from other comparable programs in the university will be compared to data based on students in the program;*
- *Program faculty will meet regularly to assess courses and student performance;*
- *Program faculty will review all theses and area papers written in a given assessment period and evaluate related student performance.*

### **2005-2006**

- **Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):**

*See Discussion Below*

- **Discussion/Dissemination of Results:**

*Assessment of the program's efficiency is based primarily on faculty evaluation of student work throughout the program, student evaluation of each course in the curriculum that they take and committee assessment of the quality of area papers and*

theses. Final grades of "A" or "B" are generally necessary to continue in the program. A student may receive a "C" in a maximum of two courses and is formally "put on notice" after having received the first grade of "C". Students evaluate both curriculum and the faculty in every class in which they are enrolled. Those evaluations are maintained at the departmental level and inform the annual evaluation of the faculty member by the department head. Further, a copy of the evaluations are returned to the professor so that those suggested changes as appear prudent may be incorporated.

Area papers and theses are written under the direction of a primary professor and are then critiqued by two other graduate faculty members. Edits and corrections must be completed to the committee's satisfaction. In assessing the area paper or thesis, the committee considers the "expected student learning outcomes" as minimum standards to be achieved. Approval of the product by the committee is evidence that those standards were achieved. Obviously, these projects are capstones to the program and successful completion implies impending graduation. From summer semester 2005, through fall semester 2005 and spring semester 2006 we graduated the following:

Summer 2005- 1 graduate (thesis)  
Fall 2005- 0 graduates  
Spring 2006- 5 graduates (all area papers)

- Modifications Made:

*None at the program level.*

## **2006-2007**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

*See Discussion Below*

- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

*Process remained unchanged from the previous year. From summer 2006, through fall 2006 and spring 2007 we graduated the following:*

*Summer 2006- 1 graduate (thesis)  
Fall 2006- 1 graduate (area paper)  
Spring 2007- 2 graduates (both area papers)*

- Modifications Made:

*None at the program level.*

## **2007-2008**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):

*See Discussion Below*

- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

Process remained unchanged from the previous year. From summer 2007, through fall 2008, and spring and summer 2008 we graduated the following:

Summer 2007- 1 graduate (area paper)

Fall 2007- 1 graduate (area paper)

Spring 2008-6 graduates (5 area papers, 1 thesis)

Summer 2008- 3 graduates (2 area papers, 1 thesis)

- **Modifications Made:**

*None at the program level. Some needs have been identified, and in the upcoming year, several initiatives will be explored. While we are getting useful data from the present assessment measures, there is more that can be captured. Relevant discussion at the departmental level will include such topics as:*

- 1) departmental contact with alumni regarding the curriculum and the jobs in which they find themselves;*
- 2) increased community involvement so that the industry might make its needs better known, and thereby be better served;*
- 3) a reconsideration of the stated mission of the program and the feasibility of reframing the statement to better reflect the mission as it is perceived at present, and;*
- 4) an exploration of certification of the MSCJ program by the American Criminal Justice Society (ACJS) which is the only certifying body in the discipline. This certification program imposes substantial program assessment measures and significant standards related to achieving a program of the highest regard.*

*Additionally, an effort will be made to parse out and isolate the relevant data from already existing survey efforts undertaken at an institutional level.*

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<b>Dept. Head/ Director</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dean</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>VPAA</b>	<b>Date</b>
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Adapted from: University of Alabama SACS site (<http://sacs.ua.edu/degreeInfo2.cfm?college=2&dept=50>);

University of Western Kentucky SACS Accreditation Review Process (<http://www.wku.edu/sacs/assessmentmanual.htm>) ; and

Mrs. Marila D. Palmer, VP-Executive Affairs & Planning, LeTourneau University, Presentation to 2008 SACS-COC Institute