

PROGRAM REVIEW

Western Nevada College

A.A., Criminal Justice

I. Description of Program Reviewed

The Criminal Justice transfer emphasis is an associate of arts degree for students who are planning to transfer to UNR, UNLV, or any other four-year institution. Students who complete the program are expected to be able to articulate the legal requirements of search and seizure, recognize and evaluate criminal law, process crime scenes, and analyze theories for committing crimes, among other outcomes. The 60-credit program requires 21-24 credits in the emphasis and 36-39 credits of general education.

II. Review Process and Criteria

Four criminal justice programs were reviewed together in 2009-2010 in order to identify strengths and challenges in terms of student success and satisfaction, recruitment, enrollment, curriculum, and scheduling. The A.A. in Criminal Justice emphasis program was reviewed along with two A.A.S. programs and one certificate of achievement program. Institutional Research staff provided data used as evidence to support findings and recommendations.

The self-study process followed program review guidelines developed by WNC's Program Assessment and Review Committee (PARC). Internal and external reviewers provided feedback on the self-study report as well as findings and recommendations based on review of the self-study report, a tour of facilities, an exit interview with the President and the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and a focus group discussion with students from all four programs. An English professor from WNC served as the internal reviewer. Two individuals served as external reviewers: a professor and former chairman of UNR's Department of Criminal Justice, and a Storey County law enforcement professional who teaches criminal justice classes part-time at WNC.

III. Major Findings and Conclusions of the Program Review

Commendations

- Full-time and adjunct criminal justice faculty are dedicated and share a high level of *esprit de corps*.
- Criminal justice programs serve the needs of area law enforcement agencies well.

Findings and Recommendations

Recommendations (in italics) are attributed as follows: Program Review Team [P]; Internal Reviewer [I]; External Reviewer [E].

- At present, the program has no coordinator responsible for ensuring academic rigor and integrity for all criminal justice degree and certificate of achievement programs.
Recommendation: When the budget improves, re-establish the program coordinator position to oversee recruitment, faculty evaluations, curriculum, and scheduling and to improve program consistency across campuses in Carson, Fallon, and Douglas. [P,I,E]
- The curriculum is heavily weighted toward law enforcement.
Recommendation: Offer as electives a greater variety of courses in courts and

corrections (e.g. courses in victimology, comparative justice systems) to better serve the needs of students seeking careers in subsystems other than law enforcement. [I,E]

- No opportunity for interning exists.

Recommendation: Offer an elective internship course to upper-level students as is required of programs seeking to meet Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences standards. [I,E]

- Overlap and redundancies exist in the course descriptions and objectives for CRJ 220 (Criminal Procedures), 230 (Criminal Law), 222 (Criminal Law and Procedure), and 225 (Criminal Evidence).

Recommendation: Retain CRJ 222, which combines criminal law and procedures into one course in keeping with the national trend, and eliminate CRJ 220 and 230. Review and update course outlines to eliminate remaining redundancies. [I,E]

- The CRJ 101 (Introduction to Criminal Justice I) prerequisite for CRJ 222 (Criminal Law and Procedure) is not enforced, so students are allowed to enter CRJ 222 out of sequence and unprepared.

Recommendation: Enforce the CRJ 101 prerequisite for CRJ 222 so that students are properly prepared for the course. [I,E]

- Two core requirements for the degree, CRJ 164 (Principles of Investigation) and CRJ 225 (Criminal Evidence), serve only those students interested in law enforcement and not those interested in other subsystems.

Recommendation: Offer these courses as program electives. [I,E]

- Currently both CRJ 101 and 102 are offered in both the spring and the fall.

Recommendation: Offer the courses sequentially so that they don't compete for enrollment. [I,E]

- Graduates of the program are not in good position to complete a B.A. in Criminal Justice at UNR within four years even though they transfer in as juniors.

Recommendation: Review and update transfer agreements with UNR and UNLV on a regular basis to ensure that course articulations are current and understood by all parties. [I,E]

Recommendation: Make changes to the curriculum to enable students who are transferring to UNR to complete a bachelor's degree in four years, including requiring four semesters of a foreign language and a statistics course. [I,E]

IV. Descriptive Statistics

A. Number of students with declared major in the program area:

2009-10 149 (does not include summer 2010)

B. Number of graduates from the program for the following years:

2007-08 9

2008-09 14

2009-10 6 (partial data for spring 2010; no data for summer 2010)

C. Headcount of students enrolled in any course related to the program (duplicated):

Fall 2009 409