

PROGRAM REVIEW

Western Nevada College

A.A.S., Criminal Justice

I. Description of Program Reviewed

The Criminal Justice Associate of Applied Science degree prepares students for criminal justice careers in probation and parole, corrections, juvenile justice and law enforcement. With this degree, students will understand the basics of criminal law and law enforcement pertaining to each of these career areas. The 60-credit program requires 36 core and emphasis credits and 24 general education credits.

II. Review Process and Criteria

Four criminal justice programs were reviewed together in 2009-2010 in order to identify program strengths and challenges in terms of student success and satisfaction, recruitment, enrollment, curriculum, and scheduling. The A.A.S. in Criminal Justice program was reviewed along with one other A.A.S. program, an A.A. program, 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].

- WNC offers too many degree and certificate programs in criminal justice, causing resources to be spread too thin.

Recommendation: Consider terminating the A.A.S. in Criminal Justice program in its current form to concentrate resources on the A.A. transfer degree and the Western Nevada State Peace Officer Academy, a 27-credit component of the Criminal Justice Law Enforcement/Academy A.A.S. and Certificate of Achievement. [P,I,E]

- At present, there is no program 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 and comparative justice systems) to better serve the needs of students seeking careers in subsystems other than law enforcement. [I,E]
- No opportunity for an internship 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), 225 (Criminal Evidence), and 265 (Introduction to Physical 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]
- Three core and emphasis requirements—CRJ 164 (Principles of Investigation), CRJ 225 (Criminal Evidence), and CRJ 265 (Introduction to Physical Evidence)—serve only those students interested in law enforcement and not those interested in other subsystems.
Recommendation: Offer those courses as electives. [I,E]
- Currently both CRJ 101 (Introduction to Criminal Justice I) and 102 (Introduction to Criminal Justice II) are offered in both the spring and the fall, causing them to compete for enrollment.
Recommendation: Offer CRJ 101 in the fall and CRJ 102 in the spring. [I,E]

IV. Descriptive Statistics

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

2009-10 138 (does not include summer 2010)

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

2007-08 4

2008-09 4

2009-10 3 (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 445