**Annual Assessment Report for Criminal Justice Division, B.S. 2018/2019**

**May 2019**

Introduction and Method

For the 2018/2019 academic year, the Criminal Justice Division voted to utilize standardized testing for content knowledge in the discipline using a longitudinal design so that we could view improvements over a period of a few years. In the past, the Criminal Justice Division reviewed a different PLO each year. We found out different things about our students – generally that they perform in the average range on a variety of different tasks. We had a difficult time using the different assessment results each year to make substantial changes to our program. By using a standardized testing procedure and by measuring the same PLO (content knowledge /information literacy) over a period of years we can work to use better learning techniques and expand what our curriculum is teaching our students. The Assessment and Program Development Committee interviewed three different standardized assessment companies (including ETS and Peregrine) and we ultimately decided to use Peregrine, as they focused on specialized criminal justice content, could provide us with a random assortment of questions they standardized for each student, and could also provide us with detailed reports that would show strengths, weaknesses, and how our students compare to students in similar national programs.

With a limited budget, we were able to assess 140 students, as the total cost took our entire budget. We did receive a discount ($42/assessment) due to having over 100 assessments, with the next price break (to $40/assessment) available with 500 or more student assessments. We chose to assess four different capstone classes (all taken by Criminal Justice seniors getting ready to graduate) and one section of research methods, which is a class taken by incoming juniors to our major. Thus, we planned to assess 110 seniors and 35 incoming juniors. The students had additions to their syllabi, including wording as to how the assessment would be graded:

***You are able to take part in a special way to get extra credit in this section of CRJ 101:***

*During the month of February 2019, you may use the credit from taking part in our division’s program evaluation to substitute a 10/10 (worth 5% of your grade) for your lowest quiz.*

*To earn this “perfect score” exam you would be taking a standardized Criminal Justice content exam. Your scores will be used to help guide the Division of Criminal Justice’s program evaluation in our efforts to continuously improve. We ask that you try your hardest to answer the questions, so that we can have a baseline for what knowledge you have learned when you enter the Criminal Justice major. Once you are alerted of the dates of the exam, you will have one week to take the online exam. The assessment takes approximately one hour of time and can be taken in one sitting during the week.*

The CRJ 190 course syllabi had similar wording, the same amount of credit awarded, and only their status (graduating seniors in the major) had different wording.

Most students in all of the classes assessed chose to take the assessment and they were given 5% course credit. After administering the assessment and getting the scores, we could see that our students did not do as well as students from other programs. After consultation with Peregrine, they determined that the other programs gave half credit for taking the assessment, and half credit for the grade they earned on the assessment. This method of giving students credit for how well they did proved to be an important student motivator. We learned that many students did not use enough time to take the assessment (under 20 minutes was inappropriately short), so we took out students (in our aggregate reports) who answered the over 100 questions in under 20 minutes. We will modify our instructions next year to note that they get credit based on the scores they earn on the assessment. We believe that our students will do uniformly better (and more in line with other programs) when they are given a more motivating prompt.

Results of the Assessment

The following attached reports were used to report the following results:

1. Internal Analysis Report
2. External Analysis Report
3. Response Distractor Report
4. Student Survey Results

Please review the graphs and tables in each report. Here are the main results from these four reports.

A total of 140 students took the content exam. Thirty-two inbound students (Research Methods) and 108 outbound (Capstone course) students took the Peregrine Criminal Justice Content Exam. After evaluating the amount of time each student took to complete the 100 plus questions, all students who took less than 20 minutes were eliminated from the data set. The rationale is that with less than 20 minutes, the student is clearly not spending the necessary time to do their best work. After these students were removed, there remained 29 inbound and 96 outbound students.

Each student was introduced to the idea of the content exam on the first day of class as the syllabus was reviewed. During the months of February and March, each class was given a minimum of one week to access the exam. The inbound students had two attempts to complete the assessment, as over half of them did not access the assessment in time.

All scores in all content areas (see attached reports) were found to be in the average to above average range. The average range was determined as being 40-49% and the above average range was determined as being 50-59%. Our outbound students clearly outperformed our inbound students on almost all of the topics. In one topic (research and analytics) our inbound students did slightly better, possibly because they were currently in a research methods class. Mean completion times (with outliers removed) were Inbound = 45.1 minutes and Outbound = 46.3 minutes. Highest scores for Inbound students were in the content areas of Law Enforcement, Law Adjudication, Courts, and Juvenile Justice. The lowest area was Criminal Theory. For Outbound students, highest scores were in Law Enforcement, Law Adjudication, Juvenile Justice, Ethics and Diversity, Courts, and Administration of Justice. The lowest average scores were in Research and Analytics.

There were definite trends for Outbound students to have higher scores than Inbound students. No data analysis was completed to see if there were significant differences between Inbound to Outbound (nor Outbound to outside programs) because this year a) served as a pilot year to compare future years with, b) did not use the better methodology to have students try their best, and c) the Inbound students did not have enough students to make a true comparison. When reviewing the aggregate reports, one can view a variety of strengths and weaknesses our students have in a variety of topic and subtopic areas. Both inter and intra-subject differences can be seen when reviewing the tables. It will be interesting next year to analyze our larger numbers (using both this year and next year’s assessment data) to see if there are statistical differences between different topics and subtopics between inbound and outbound and between our outbound and other similar programs. The Response Distractor Report indicated that most of our students made fact-based, and occasionally concept-based errors. It is likely that our students did not know the material they missed, and they generally understood how to apply the knowledge they had.

The External Analysis Report indicates that our seniors did not score as high as graduating seniors in other programs in the United States who are also four-year public programs. Peregrine indicated that the other programs used the better methodology to obtain the higher scores. Additionally, we are piloting their program along with many other first-time programs. Next year, more programs will be added for a better comparison to more programs.

Our graduating seniors also took a survey evaluating multiple aspects of the Criminal Justice Division’s traditional B.S. program. We found that our students, made up of 111 respondents, were generally satisfied or very satisfied about most parts of our program. Students were satisfied to very satisfied (please see graphs from the attachment Student Survey Results) in response to questions such as the following:

* Quality of instruction
* Access to faculty
* Content and structure of the major
* Quality of advising
* Overall quality of instruction
* Frequency of needed courses being taught
* Class sizes
* Genuinely interested faculty
* Faculty who are genuinely interested in students’ academic progress
* Opportunities to participate in independent projects, internships, or community service
* Current course content
* Relevant requirements for the degree
* Challenging coursework
* A sense of competence in their knowledge of criminal justice issues
* Having a solid foundation for graduate work
* Understanding the connection between the policy-making process and the criminal justice continuum
* Can integrate theoretical knowledge with practical situations.

Students were not as satisfied with the following:

* Usefulness of texts and course materials
* Availability of classes

Conclusion

This first year of the Criminal Justice Division’s traditional B.S. program longitudinal assessment went very well. A total of 125 inbound and outbound students had valid test scores on the Peregrine Criminal Justice Content Exam, and 111 outbound students took the student survey. Results include a finding that our students perform between the average and high average range on all criminal justice topics. Some material covered by the exam was not covered in coursework, while most other material was represented in our courses. Since our methodology did not pull for our students’ highest scores, we will wait until the results from next year’s assessment to look more statistically at strengths and weaknesses in individual topics and subtopics. We have found that our students are overall satisfied with our program, particularly the quality of the faculty and courses provided. We are less successful at satisfying our students’ needs for low cost and high value course materials and having enough course sections and variety to fulfill our students’ needs. We will work to “close the loop” this year by working with our Chair and the Curriculum committee to make sure that students’ needs are represented with the courses offered next academic year. We will also review low cost and high value materials with our faculty, possibly inviting speakers with good information to a faculty meeting.