



January 2011

Master of Science in Law and Justice Central Washington University

Introduction

Central Washington University (CWU) proposes to offer a Master of Science in Law and Justice beginning fall 2011. Like CWU's Bachelor of Arts in Law and Justice, the proposed program would be housed in the College of the Sciences' Law and Justice Department. Program planners project initial enrollment of 15 FTE students, growing to full enrollment of 30 FTE by 2012. Thereafter, the proposed program would produce 20 graduates per year prepared to enter or enhance their careers in fields such as law enforcement, corrections, court administration, and social services.

Initially, CWU plans to offer the program via hybrid delivery in Kent. Within three years, program planners also expect to offer it at the main campus in Ellensburg. CWU currently offers the B.A. in Law and Justice at its main campus and Yakima, Lynnwood, Pierce, and Des Moines locations. Program planners chose Kent as the location for the new M.S. program because there are large numbers of potential Puget Sound region applicants and a regional justice center is nearby.

In December 2001, the Higher Education Coordinating Board approved an M.S. in Law and Justice to be offered at Ellensburg and SeaTac, but budget constraints prevented timely implementation.¹ In November 2010, CWU submitted this new proposal, which changed the funding source from state funding to self support and the start location from SeaTac to Kent. Although the program would initially be self-supporting, CWU would like to convert it to state supported if funds become available.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington

CWU's mission includes preparing students for enlightened and productive lives and solving human problems.² The proposed program would support this mission by preparing students for law and justice professions, which exist to address current and future human problems. By offering hybrid delivery and a track that will help working law and justice professionals advance in their organizations, the program would support the state's *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* strategy of creating a system of support for lifelong learning.

¹ HECB *Program and Facility Approval Policies and Procedures* allow three years to enroll students after approval.

² CWU's mission statement is available at <http://www.cwu.edu/~pres/mission.html>.

Program Need

The Employment Security Department projects average employment growth in protective service and legal occupations and above average growth in community and social services occupations during 2013-2018. Furthermore, according to the most recent employer needs assessment joint report, human/protective services degree production is sufficient to meet only 79 percent of future demand for workers.³ These projections indicate sufficient employer demand for the proposed program.

Strong student demand for the program is evidenced by the fact that CWU receives at least one inquiry per week from law and justice professionals seeking an appropriate master's degree. In May 2010, program planners surveyed more than 2,000 law and justice alumni who graduated between 1990 and 2009. Three quarters of the 153 respondents (117) said they were interested in enrolling and 76 said they would like to start in 2011. One respondent said "I have found in today's economy it is often hard to find positions for those of us with just a B.A."

In July 2010, CWU surveyed 115 alumni interested in enrolling in the proposed program to determine their perception of the benefits it would provide. Twenty-two out of 25 respondents (88 percent) noted potential benefits, with common themes being improved hiring possibilities, greater opportunity for promotion, and higher pay and retirement benefits. For example, the Washington State Patrol rewards a master's degree holder with a 2 percent salary increase relative to a bachelor's degree holder, plus a corresponding increase in pension.

To gauge demand from students who would be entering with a bachelor's degree but without professional experience, planners surveyed 531 current CWU undergraduate law and justice students during March 2010. Out of 70 respondents, 54 expressed interest in the proposed program.

There is compelling community need for the program. The Department of Correction's (DOC) *Strategic Plan 2007-2013* indicates the state's offender population increased by 48 percent between 1996 and 2006, and is projected to increase another 31 percent by 2017.

In 2007, the state legislature enacted ESSB 6157, which directed the DOC to continue establishing community justice centers throughout the state, review its policies, and transform its work release facilities into effective residential re-entry centers.

There is support in the local community for the proposed program; 17 external law and justice professionals have agreed to serve on the program advisory board. Furthermore, CWU Kent is located one block from the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center, which would benefit from the proposed program's internships.

The proposal included letters of support from William Holmes, Probation Services Director, Kittitas County; and John Clayton, Assistant Secretary, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, Department of Social and Health Services.

³ Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. *A Skilled and Educated Workforce: An assessment of the number and type of higher education and training credentials required to meet employer demand* (2009). Page 14.

The program would meet employer, student, and community needs without duplicating existing programs. Although Washington State University offers a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice, it is in eastern Washington. Seattle University offers a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice in Seattle; the University of Phoenix offers a Master of Science in Administration of Justice and Security online; and Columbia College offers a Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration online. The proposed program would offer students a hybrid delivery alternative. It also would offer a curriculum that differs in focus and structure from existing programs.

Diversity

The Law and Justice department's nine tenured/tenure-track faculty includes four women and three faculty of color. Thirty percent of the department's undergraduate majors identify themselves as racial or ethnic minorities and 40 percent are women. To duplicate and perhaps increase this diversity in the proposed program, the department would advertise to professional groups, such as minority and women's professional organizations in policing, corrections, law, and social and human services. It also would advertise to student organizations such as Latino, Black, Native American, and Asian Pacific Islander student unions and would partner with University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) to recruit diverse graduates from UWT's recently approved B.A. in Criminal Justice program and other related programs.

Program Description

The proposed program would serve students with professional law and justice experience seeking to enhance their careers and students preparing to start or switch to careers in law and justice. To meet the needs of these divergent groups, the program would feature two specializations. Students with relevant professional experience would choose the Advanced Professional specialization,⁴ which would include a research project and paper, possibly based on data from the student's employer.

Students without relevant professional experience would choose the Basic Career specialization. Although the Basic Career specialization would not include a research project, it would include a required internship and final portfolio or paper related to the internship experience. Students in either group could elect to write an optional master's thesis if they wished.

To be admitted, students must meet basic graduate school admission standards, supply two letters of reference, and possess a bachelor's degree in a social science. In addition, students interested in the Advanced Professional specialization must have professional experience in law and justice.

After admission, students in the Advanced Professional specialization would complete at least 45 quarter credits, and students in the Basic Career specialization would complete at least 60 quarter credits. All students would complete five core classes (25 credits), including theory and practice, research methods, and legal liability of criminal justice professionals; a master's capstone course; and a master's thesis, project study, or portfolio.

⁴ Program planners estimate that about 75 percent of students would choose the Advanced Professional specialization.

In addition to the core, students in the Advanced Professional specialization would complete two courses (10 credits) selected from a menu⁵ of graduate-level courses offered by the department, plus 10 credits of approved 400-level (or higher) electives. In addition to the core, students in the Basic Career specialization would complete an internship (5 credits) and four graduate-level courses (20 credits) offered by the department, plus 10 credits of approved 400-level (or higher) electives.⁶

Courses would be taught primarily by full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty and the program director would work in Kent full-time. Most courses would feature hybrid delivery, consisting of three hours in the classroom and two hours online. Courses would be offered evenings and weekends by faculty at Kent, with faculty at Ellensburg delivering a few courses online.

Students would have access to remote library services from CWU Ellensburg and CWU Des Moines and to on-site disability support, career, financial aid, and student services provided by coordinators serving CWU's Kent, Des Moines, Pierce, Lynnwood, and Everett locations jointly. These coordinators travel among sites.

Students could complete the program full-time or part-time. Full-time students would typically complete the Advanced Professional track in five quarters or the Basic Career track in six quarters. Part-time students would typically complete the Advanced Professional track in nine quarters or the Basic Career track in 12 quarters.

Assessment would employ multiple measures and include coursework, entry and exit surveys, a capstone project and, for the Basic Career track, an internship evaluation. Program assessment would include career placement or advancement rates, as well as additional information from student, alumni, internship supervisor, and advisory board surveys.

Program Costs

The proposed program would enroll 15 FTE students in 2011, and achieve full enrollment of 30 FTE students in 2012. It would be delivered by current faculty and would use existing office, computer lab, and library facilities. Initially it would be self-supporting, though CWU would like to convert it to state support if funds become available. Students enrolling in 2011 could complete the program for \$17,505 or \$23,340, depending on whether they chose the Advanced Professional specialization or the Basic Career specialization.

To staff the program, the department has budgeted 0.83 FTE faculty and 1.17 FTE administrative staff the first year, and 0.99 FTE faculty and 1.17 FTE administrative staff at full enrollment from the second year onward. These figures include a full-time on-site faculty program director, who would provide 0.33 FTE teaching effort and 0.67 FTE administrative effort.

⁵ The menu consists of one 600-level special topics course and six 500-level Law and Justice courses covering the following subjects within the field: personnel issues; constitutional issues; race, class, and gender; ethical issues; law and social control; and history of criminal justice.

⁶ The menus of 600- and 500-level Law and Justice courses for the Basic Career and Advanced Professional specializations are the same. The difference between the two specializations is that the Basic Career specialization requires a five-credit internship and 10 additional credits of 500-level Law and Justice course work.

To pay for the proposed program, the department budgeted \$196,033 (\$13,069 per FTE student) for the first year, increasing to \$205,583 (\$6,853 per FTE student) at full enrollment in the second year. Costs per FTE student lie within the range of costs in graduate social sciences at Washington public baccalaureate institutions reported in the HECB's *2005-06 Education Cost Study* (July 2007). From the second year forward, tuition and fees would exceed the direct cost of instruction by at least \$138,000 per year.

External Review

Two reviewers evaluated the proposal: Dr. Phyllis Gerstenfeld, Professor and Chair, Department of Criminal Justice, California State University Stanislaus; and Dr. Rich Furman, Associate Professor and Director, Social Work and Criminal Justice, University of Washington Tacoma. Both reviewers recommended approval of the program.

Dr. Gerstenfeld noted several program strengths, including hybrid delivery, faculty quality and diversity, and specializations designed to meet needs of students with different experience levels. She described the curriculum as "appropriate." However, she recommended adding a course on program evaluation or policy research to the curriculum and adding a research methods course to the admission requirements.

Program planners indicated a core course on research methods would emphasize policy research and methodology and other courses in the curriculum would have a strong focus on policy and policy research. They also indicated a prerequisite research methods course would be more appropriate for a program oriented toward laying a foundation for Ph.D. work. Nonetheless, the department will notify students selected for admission that it assumes they are familiar with undergraduate research methods and theory.

Dr. Furman said both specializations were "academically rigorous." He indicated he had no concerns and no recommendations for improvement. He ended his review by saying "I strongly recommend this program be approved. I believe that it will be an excellent addition to the field, the state, and the greater community."

Staff Analysis

Although the proposed program was approved by the Board in 2001, it was not implemented within three years. When notified of CWU's current intent to implement the program, HECB staff asked CWU to submit a new proposal because the location differed from that originally proposed and nine years had elapsed since 2001.

The new proposal and other sources provide sufficient evidence the program would respond to current employer, student, and community demand without duplicating other programs. In addition, the program would be offered at a reasonable cost and support CWU's mission and the goals of the *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington*.

Students would study a curriculum that one reviewer characterized as “appropriate” and a second as “academically rigorous.” The curriculum’s Advanced Professional specialization would benefit students with professional experience by enhancing their skill and opportunities for advancement. Its Basic Career specialization would benefit students seeking to enter or switch to the field by making them more attractive to employers, particularly given the required internship.

Students would be taught primarily by full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty, and CWU’s capacity to offer the program has increased since 2001, from four tenured/tenure-track faculty to nine. Student and program assessment would each employ multiple measures.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommend approval of the Master of Science in Law and Justice at Central Washington University in Kent and Ellensburg. The HECB’s Education Committee discussed the proposal during its January 11, 2010 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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RESOLUTION NO. 11-01

WHEREAS, Central Washington University proposes to offer a Master of Science in Law and Justice; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the university's mission as well as the state's 2008 *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to student, employer, and community need without duplicating existing programs; and

WHEREAS, The program would serve students seeking to enter or enhance law and justice careers; and

WHEREAS, The program has support from external reviewers; and

WHEREAS, The program would be offered at a reasonable cost; and

WHEREAS, The program would be offered initially in Kent and later in Ellensburg;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Master of Science in Law and Justice, effective January 27, 2011.

Adopted:

January 27, 2011

Attest:



Ethelda Burke, Chair



Earl Hale, Vice Chair

