

March 2010

Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice University of Washington Tacoma

Introduction

The University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice beginning fall 2010. Housed within UWT's Social Work Program, the proposed program would serve students interested in focusing on social justice and other social issues in the criminal justice field. It would complement an existing criminal justice minor and provide a pathway for community college and lower-division UWT students to obtain a baccalaureate degree in the field.

The proposed program would enroll about 21 FTE students the first year, increasing to full enrollment of about 54 FTE by the fifth year. At full enrollment, it would graduate 30-35 students per year who would be prepared for work in a broad range of occupations such as probation officers; correctional treatment specialists; social work or psychology associate positions in corrections; or other positions in corrections, law enforcement, or social service agencies.¹ Graduates would also be prepared for future graduate studies in fields such as law, criminal justice, or social work.

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

According to its mission statement, UWT educates diverse learners and transforms communities by expanding the boundaries of knowledge and discovery. UWT's vision includes commitments to an interdisciplinary approach and a strong relationship with surrounding communities. The proposed program aligns with this mission and vision in that it would examine the justice system from an ecological systems approach, rather than specializing in a narrow content area such as

¹ The proposed program would not include technical courses dealing with police procedures or provide other occupation-specific training. However, it would allow students who have already completed such training to expand their education by learning to evaluate broader aspects of the criminal justice system and develop theoretical and analytical knowledge and skills. For example, it would expose students to the latest research regarding marginalized groups disproportionately represented in our prison system and also to evidence-based approaches for working with families of victims and perpetrators of crime.

police procedures.² It would expand boundaries by emphasizing rehabilitation, alternatives to standard incarceration, and community- and evidence-based approaches.³ Furthermore, its internship opportunities would strengthen UWT's relationship with surrounding communities.

The proposed program would support the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* by increasing the educational attainment of people in the South Puget Sound area in the criminal justice field. Currently, a number of entry-level criminal justice-related degrees are associate degrees. By serving a target audience that includes holders of such degrees, the proposed program would support the *Master Plan* in terms of creating career pathways between two- and four-year degree programs. Even in cases where a BA may not be required for entry into law enforcement or corrections occupations, it can be important for career advancement to administrative positions.

Diversity

To enhance diversity, Criminal Justice Program staff would:

- Seek campus and community service positions for faculty to strengthen alliances with local law enforcement, businesses, and agencies in the criminal justice field working on disproportionality issues;
- Advertise in media serving underrepresented groups and at community events celebrating their cultures;
- Connect with student organizations at UWT, such as the Latino Student Organization, Black Student Union, Native American Student Organization, Asian Pacific Islander Student Union, and their community college counterparts;
- Share information about the proposed program by networking with community partners that the Social Work Program has developed through its field learning component;
- Advise and mentor students from diverse backgrounds.

Program Need

According to the joint report, *A Skilled and Educated Workforce* (2009),⁴ human/protective services is a field with one of the largest gaps between current supply and forecast demand. The joint report notes that current human/protective services degree production is sufficient to meet

² An ecological systems framework assumes that people's behavior cannot be understood without taking into account the dynamics between them and systems that impact their lives, including family, agencies, institutions, policies, and societal values. Thus, this approach emphasizes interconnections between criminal justice problems and social institutions, rather than compartmentalizing criminal justice into "cops, courts, and corrections."

³ One example is the Sequential Intercept Model, which helps communities develop strategies to divert people with mental illness from the criminal justice system. Another example is the Reclaiming Futures Model, which promotes standards of care for juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment.

only 79 percent of future demand. The Employment Security Department projects employment in protective service and legal occupations will grow faster than average statewide and in Pierce County during 2012-2017. However, both statewide and in Pierce County, community and social services employment will grow more slowly than average during the same period.

Several community colleges⁵ in the South Puget Sound region offer associate degrees in at least one track of criminal justice, as well as related human services fields. A 2009 survey of Pierce College, South Puget Sound Community College, and Tacoma Community College students intending to pursue four-year degrees indicated that six students (3.8 percent of those responding) were interested in enrolling in a B.A. Criminal Justice program. If this result is extrapolated on the basis of the number of community college students who transferred to UWT in fall 2009, it yields an estimate of 21 interested transfer students. Student interest is corroborated by Tacoma Community College's (TCC) Dean of Health, Justice, and Human Services, who strongly believes a Criminal Justice major at UWT, would be well attended because TCC's students have frequently remarked on the need for a four-year program in Tacoma.

As additional evidence for student need, program planners cited a 2009 UWT Office of Institutional Research and Planning survey in which Criminal Justice was UWT students' first choice for a new major from among 14 possible majors. Out of 310 respondents, 43 (14 percent) identified criminal justice as a field of interest, with 11 indicating that they would major in it. A subsequent campus-wide survey indicated that 19 out of 265 respondents (7 percent) were interested in a criminal justice degree, with 14 saying they would definitely or most likely enroll if offered. Extrapolating this 7 percent to the population of freshmen and sophomores at UWT yields an estimate of 45 interested students per year. Strong student enrollments in courses offered for the Criminal Justice minor corroborate these results. As of December 2009, 28 students from five different departments across campus have formally declared a Criminal Justice minor.⁶ These institutional statistics are consistent with national student demand statistics for criminal justice programs, which indicate that criminal justice programs are often some of the largest university programs.⁷

⁴ An employer needs assessment report prepared jointly by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Technical and Community Colleges, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

⁵ The community colleges in the region with criminal justice programs are Centralia College, Green River Community College, Highline Community College, Olympic College, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom, South Puget Sound Community College, and Tacoma Community College. During 2008, these institutions awarded a combined total of 60 associate degrees in criminal justice. The proposed program would serve students with associate degrees in other fields too.

⁶ Also, on January 25-26, 2010, program planners surveyed students currently enrolled in three criminal justice classes and found that 42 of these students plan to minor in criminal justice and 12 plan to major in it. About 75 percent of respondents plan to work for employers in enforcement, social services/psychology, or courts/law fields.

⁷ According to Inside Higher Ed, by 2006, criminal justice overtook sociology in terms of number of bachelor's degrees completed. Inside Higher Ed (August 4, 2008). *Sociology's Crime Problem*. www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/08/04/asa.

Several sources signal community need for the proposed program. At the state level, the Department of Corrections' (DOC) *Strategic Plan 2007-2013* notes that the incarcerated offender population increased by 48 percent between fiscal years 1996 and 2006 and is projected to increase another 31 percent by 2017. As this happens, the impact on children of incarcerated parents will increase, and more offenders will need assistance reentering the community as they complete their sentences. 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 reentry centers. A Pew Research Center Report notes that policy makers are becoming “*increasingly aware of research-backed strategies for community corrections.*”⁸ Similarly, a Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) report commissioned by the Legislature studied evidence-based options to reduce future prison construction, criminal justice costs, and crime rates. All of these examples signal an underlying community need to take a different approach to criminal justice. The proposed program would respond to by emphasizing rehabilitation, alternatives to standard incarceration, and evidence-based approaches and by offering students internship opportunities.

Although several institutions⁹ in the South Puget Sound region offer baccalaureate criminal justice programs, the proposed program would differ from them by emphasizing social justice and ecological systems perspectives, rather than law enforcement or legal approaches. None of these institutions objected to or otherwise commented on the proposed program.

Program Description

Using a multi-disciplinary approach, the proposed program aims to provide a theoretical understanding of the discipline, combined with an understanding of the scientific method as it applies to criminal justice. Although it would not include technical courses on police procedures, it would equip students to work in a variety of criminal justice settings. For example, graduates would be particularly well suited to work with agencies that provide services for children and families of the incarcerated.

The proposed program's target audience would include UWT lower-division students interested in entering the criminal justice field and students who already hold an associate degree. Students could complete the program part- or full-time. The majority of classes would be delivered face-to-face at the Tacoma campus, but a few courses may be offered via distance learning or hybrid delivery. Optional internships would be completed off-campus at various employer facilities.

⁸ The Pew Charitable Trusts (2008). *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*. Page 3. Available at: www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedfiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/reports/sentencing_and_corrections/one_in_100.pdf. Community corrections includes parole, fines, diversion, restitution, community treatment centers, work-release centers, and halfway houses.

⁹ Four universities offer bachelor's degrees in criminal justice-related fields in South Puget Sound: Brandman University (B.A. in Criminal Justice, Lacey), Central Washington University (B.A. in Law and Justice, Des Moines and Pierce College Fort Steilacoom), Saint Martin's University (B.A. in Criminal Justice, Lacey, Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base, and Centralia College), University of Phoenix (B.A. in Criminal Justice Administration, Tacoma and Tukwila). In addition, Washington State University offers a B.A. in Criminal Justice online.

To be admitted, students must have satisfied UWT's general admission requirements; completed at least 60 credits with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.0, including Introduction to Political Science (5 credits, 2.0 minimum GPA) and Introduction or Survey of Sociology (5 credits, 2.0 minimum GPA); and submitted a 1-2 page Personal Goal Statement.

To facilitate access for transfer students, UWT plans to develop articulation agreements with Green River Community College, Highline Community College, Olympic College, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom, South Puget Sound Community College, and Tacoma Community College. Program planners intend to work with each college to accommodate programs transferrable under the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) as well as technical programs. Program planners have made significant progress with Tacoma Community College and preliminary progress with several other community colleges.

Once admitted, students would take 65 credits, including 45 credits of required core courses covering police and society, criminal law, corrections, social welfare research, sociology of deviance, addictions and mental illness, and helping skills in the criminal justice system. In addition to the core courses, students would take 20 credits of electives, customizing their studies to emphasize specific aspects of criminal justice. Electives would be drawn from multiple disciplines, including social work, urban studies, interdisciplinary arts and sciences, nursing, technology, and business. Students would have the option of completing an internship¹⁰ at an organization such as the DOC, a law enforcement agency, or a social service agency. The curriculum would include a senior capstone seminar that would integrate prior course knowledge through the overarching theme of justice as an ethical ideal.

The proposed program would emphasize rehabilitation, alternatives to incarceration, evidence-based options to prevent recidivism, and other community-based options. Courses would examine their subject matter through a social justice lens, sensitizing students to the human impact of crime including differential effects of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religious creed, and physical and developmental disabilities. Courses would include findings from the latest research regarding specific marginalized groups and would cover the most current evidence-based approaches for working with the families of incarcerated individuals and victims of crime and their families.

The proposed program would require substantial new course development, including five required core courses and nine elective courses. It would be taught by a mix of tenured/tenure-track faculty and lecturers, requiring one new hire initially and another new hire by the third year.¹¹

¹⁰ The internship would be optional because program planners expect that a number of students will already be working in or have had experience in the criminal justice field and may not find an internship necessary.

¹¹ At full enrollment, the proposed program would require 3.2 FTE for instruction (of which 2.0 FTE would need to be hired) and 1.8 FTE for administration (including 0.25 FTE for faculty program director administrative duties). Of the currently employed faculty, 0.7 FTE would be provided by three full-time tenured/tenure track faculty and 0.5 FTE would be provided by two part-time lecturers, one of whom holds a doctoral degree. New hires would be tenure-track faculty with a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice or a related field with a Criminal Justice concentration.

Coursework would cover content areas specified by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.¹²

Full-time students would normally complete the program in two years and would achieve the following broad learning outcomes:

- Be prepared to enter the criminal justice field as a competent professional able to use an ecological systems approach to understand crime and its consequences;
- Understand crime and justice within the framework of broader social processes within our society;
- Understand criminal justice as an applied science where there is an integration of theory, scientific method, and practical application;
- Understand and use evidence-based practice skills to work with those who involuntarily become connected to the criminal justice system, including victims of crime and their families and the families of those who have been perpetrators of crime;
- Understand, use, and promote evidence-based methods to work with special populations in the criminal justice system such as sexual offenders, domestic violence offenders, substance abusers, the mentally ill, offenders affiliated with the military, and elderly incarcerated;
- Use effective oral and written communication skills with a range of client populations, colleagues, and members of the community.

Student-learning outcomes would be assessed within individual courses, based on learning outcomes identified for those courses. Multiple measures of student learning would be used, including examinations, papers, oral presentations, and group projects. In addition, students would complete a capstone course in their senior year that integrates knowledge gained from previous courses through the lens of ethical practice and professionalism. Students who elect to do internships would be evaluated by their internship supervisor.

The proposed program would establish an advisory board composed of community representatives with experience in the criminal justice field to assist in the assessment of the program. In addition, the program would employ multiple program assessments, including:

- Student course evaluations;
- Faculty evaluation of student assessment indicators;
- Faculty review of long-term program goals and resources required;
- Peer review of teaching, curricular offerings, and course evaluations;

¹² Although specialized accreditation is not available for criminal justice programs, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) offers a Certification Review process designed to evaluate compliance with certification standards similar to those used by accrediting bodies. ACJS certification is relatively new (2005), and ACJS is not certified as an accrediting body by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. Program planners believe it is too soon to tell how essential ACJS certification is and do not plan to seek it now, although they may do so in the future and would expect to do so if it became an accepted standard.

- Monitoring student progress through regular meetings with academic advisors;
- Periodic surveys of recent graduates;
- Periodic surveys of alumni two years after graduation to assess career placement and preparedness for employment.

Data from all of the above approaches would be analyzed for themes or patterns and used as feedback for curriculum improvement.

Program Costs

The proposed program would enroll about 21 FTE students in the first year, growing to about 54 FTE students by the fifth year. To implement the program, planners budgeted 3.2 FTE for instruction and 1.8 FTE for administration at full enrollment. The program would be funded by general fund state support and tuition. Its direct cost would be \$298,189 for the first year, which would be funded approximately 20 percent through internal reallocation from areas where capacity currently exists, and 80 percent through new funding. During the first year, with an expected 21 FTE students enrolled, total revenue would be about \$83,000 less than total direct cost. During the second year, with almost 29 FTE students, the program would about break even, and from the third year onward revenues would exceed direct costs.

At full enrollment of 54 FTE students during the fifth year, the direct cost of instruction would be \$461,410 or \$8,545 per FTE. In comparison, according to the HECB's *2005-06 Education Cost Study* (July 2007), the total cost of instruction per average annual FTE upper division undergraduate social sciences student at public Washington four-year institutions ranges from \$3,293 at Washington State University Pullman/Spokane to \$7,682 at UWT. Although the proposed program's cost per FTE falls outside this range, it would fall inside if the range were adjusted for inflation at 3 percent per year.

External Review

Three reviewers reviewed the proposal: Dr. Tina Freiburger, Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee; Dr. Carol Langer, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Social Work, Colorado State University Pueblo; and Dr. Gary Reed, Associate Professor of Justice Studies, Lewis-Clark State College.

All three reviewers supported the proposed program, commenting positively on its design. The reviewers noted various innovative aspects and ways it would respond to trends in the field. For example, Dr. Freiburger noted that while most programs across the country focus heavily on law enforcement, the proposed program focuses more on social and victim issues. She called the focus on social issues a great strength, noting that many students are interested in related careers

“ . . . but have no other option than to take courses in programs that are almost exclusively law enforcement centered.” She also noted that the proposed program’s focus on current issues such as children and families of incarcerated parents would prepare students for a greater range of career options.

Dr. Langer observed that the program emphasis on values, ethics, and skills related to human services is innovative. She also gave examples of how the proposed program would respond to trends in the field by including coursework on mental health, addictions, and sexual identity.

Dr. Reed observed that the program’s ecological model and emphasis on mental illness, substance abuse, and families are innovative strengths, noting that most programs treat these issues as peripheral topics. He noted that the proposed program is designed to address the trend of the criminal justice system increasingly assuming a de facto mental health care provider role. He also noted that by addressing the victims, children, and families impacted by crime, the proposed program reflects efforts in criminology to deal with crime’s collateral damage.

The reviewers made a few recommendations, mainly about specific content to include in the program. Program planners responded sufficiently to the recommendations. For example, in response to a recommendation Dr. Freiburger made regarding program content in corrections and racial issues specific to the criminal justice system, program planners added a core course called Corrections.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would support UWT’s mission and the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*. It would also employ multiple strategies to enhance diversity.

Program planners provided sufficient evidence of student, employer, and community need for the proposed program. Surveys indicate student need, and UWT’s plans to target both transfer and non-transfer students should ensure a consistently strong applicant pool. Overall, the joint report employer needs assessment and Employment Security Department employment projections indicate employer need, although the Employment Security Department projections send somewhat mixed signals. Finally, several sources, including the Department of Corrections and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, strongly indicate community need.

Students would study a curriculum that would respond to current trends in the field and that all three external reviewers felt would be innovative. Innovative features would include employing an ecological systems approach to understanding crime and emphasizing rehabilitation, alternatives to incarceration, evidence-based options to prevent recidivism, and other community-based options. Students would be taught primarily by full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty and would be assessed in a variety of ways that would include a capstone experience. Program assessment would employ multiple measures as well.

HECB staff compared the proposed curriculum to curricula at CWU and Saint Martin's University and agrees with UWT's assessment that the proposed program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs because its focus would be different. In fact, the proposed program's focus would be different enough from traditional programs that HECB staff was initially concerned students who sign up for the program might be surprised by its nontraditional emphasis. However, the proposed curriculum is supported by the external reviewers who stated the program responds to current trends in the field. In addition, program planners have stated that they are committed to ensuring that the program's catalog description and marketing materials make the proposed program's focus clear.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice at the University of Washington Tacoma. The Higher Education Coordinating Board's Education Committee discussed the proposal during its February 16, 2010 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 10-06

WHEREAS, The University of Washington Tacoma proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice; and

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

WHEREAS, The program would respond to student, employer, and community need; and

WHEREAS, The program's students would study a curriculum that would respond to current trends in the field; and

WHEREAS, The program has support from external reviewers, who recognize it as innovative; and

WHEREAS, The program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs; and

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

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice at the University of Washington Tacoma effective March 10, 2010.

Adopted:

March 10, 2010

Attest:

Jesús Hernandez, Chair

Earl Hale, Vice Chair