



**CRIMINAL JUSTICE (BA)
(CRIME CONTROL AND PREVENTION)**

Program Learning Assessment

**2012-2016 Assessment Planning Cycle
Key Findings and Proposed Actions**

October 1, 2015

Acknowledgments

The implementation of the 2012 to 2016 assessment plan, leading to key findings and actions to enhancing the learning experience of Criminal Justice Bachelor of Arts majors, was made possible by the active participation of talented faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice. The contributions of the following faculty members are acknowledged.

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**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
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Criminal Justice (BA) (Crime Control and Prevention)

Mission Statement and Essential Learning Outcomes

According to its mission statement, the criminal justice BA views crime as a social problem and seeks to develop in its students the capacity to critically assess the normative structure of the existing criminal justice system with an aim to improving its condition and function. The emphasis of the major is on developing analytical skills, ethical reasoning, and a capacity for solving problems. It aspires to cultivate creative and original thinking about one of the most challenging social problems of our time. Specifically, students should be able to: (1) Apply analytical, ethical, and critical reasoning skills to quantitatively, qualitatively and morally assess and evaluate the role and function of institutions engaged in the mission of crime control; (2) Articulate how institutions achieve social goals and understand and describe how to effectuate change within institutions; (3) Consider how race, ethnicity and ethnicity impact the construction and effectuation of crime control; (4) Have a broad, multidimensional focus on moral questions and be able to express the ethical implications of policy decisions; (5) Be facile with data and prefer original research to secondary sources, and (6) Think creatively and originally as evidenced by the ability to write well, construct and implement an original research design, and apply this research to present innovative solutions and insights to complex policy questions.

Consistent with this philosophy the criminal justice department has identified the following five measurable outcomes, which students should display at the conclusion of the program:

1. The capacity to critically evaluate ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy decisions.
2. The capacity to critically evaluate the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on criminal justice policy decisions.
3. The ability to construct an original research question, manifesting a familiarity with the existing literature, and an implementable research design.
4. The ability to implement that research design through the collection and interpretation of data, and to articulate proposals for policy reform.
5. Clarity of expression.

Background and Assessment Philosophy

On April 13, 2011, the College Council ratified a proposed revision of the BA in criminal justice. This revision was the product of nearly three years of discussion and collaborative effort, and represents a major new direction for criminal justice education both at John Jay and nationally.

Historically, a fundamental tension has divided criminal justice educators. At one end of the spectrum is a vocational model, often credited to William Wiltberger at University of California, Berkeley, and sometimes to police educators August Vollmer, O. W. Wilson, and V. A. Leonard. These pioneers advocated professionalizing criminal justice fields, and modeled their programs on the police academy. On this view, criminal justice education exists primarily to prepare students for law enforcement work. Justice is defined as the American practice of crime control.

At the other end of the spectrum, criminal justice education is a liberal arts curriculum in which students are equipped with skills from the social sciences and asked to question basic values. On this view, criminal justice education has a broader mandate. It is intended to inspire curiosity, to develop a general spirit of inquiry, and to cultivate and enhance a mental attitude or probing exploration.

Both nationally and at John Jay, the vocational model has by and large prevailed. As the president of ACJS said in his 2001 address, “we have no uniform theoretical infrastructure.” Many faculty members fear that criminal justice undergraduates are not up to more. Professors are reluctant to offer courses perceived as “too academic for criminal justice.”

Our research, consisting of an examination of national data, college data, focus groups with students, and discussions with leading practitioners suggests that an untapped demand exists for criminal justice practitioners with the capacity to analyze data, structure research questions, and to comment critically on matters of social policy. We believe that nurturing this new sort of undergraduate requires a fundamental rethinking of criminal justice education. The emphasis must be less on factual knowledge and more on analytical skills. Students must be trained to be empiricists, problem solvers, and most importantly, empowered to think beyond the status quo. Students must be taught to do, and do, original research. In the ultimate extension of this vision, questions of crime control are addressed by professionals and a cadre of well-mentored students who bring to bear analytical skills and exposure to a variety of perspectives and modes of thought, with the aim of generating original and ethical solutions to vexing social problems. In this ideal, criminal justice functions like any well-established social-scientific discipline.

The need for a revision of the BA in criminal justice was made clear in the last external review of the criminal justice majors in 2001. Professor Albert Roberts wrote:

B.A. v. B.S. is in reality a long time feud between the B.A. and B.S. faculties. Its historical roots go back to when there were not enough students to fill all classes. Now that the undergrad population has increased considerably, the same turf wars still exist and need to stop.

This revision resolves the conflict. The criminal justice B.S., which is also being substantially revised, will continue to serve the population it has historically served. The B.A., on the other hand, will take a giant step in a new direction, aimed at equipping students with the skills required to be policy analysts, that will serve them in graduate school. John Jay has a large enough student population to support both majors.

Our assessment plan focuses on five critical points in a student’s progress through the new major: 1) the conclusion of the introductory course, 2) the conclusion of the course on race and ethnicity, 3) the conclusion of the advanced course on research methods, 4) the outset of the senior research project, and 5) the conclusion of the senior research project, which is the capstone experience. Note that all students must complete a research project, although there are two tracks. Under Track A, students are required to design an original research project, implement the project, and collect and present data. Under Track B, students may pursue an internship experience. Under both tracks the research and writing requirement remains the same. The student must design and implement an institutional analysis, and present their written product at the conclusion of the second semester.

The courses in question – CJBA 110/11 Introduction to Major Problems in Criminal Justice I, CJBA 220 Race, Gender, Ethnicity, Crime and Justice, CJBA 340 Research Methods in Criminal Justice, CJBA 400 Criminal Justice Internship Experience /CJBA 410 Supervised Research and Writing I, and CJBA 401 Agency Analysis: Connecting Practice to Research/CJBA 411 Supervised Research and Writing II will be taken by all students within the major. In combination they will offer substantial insight into the effectiveness of the new major. In addition they will provide an important measure of individual student progress, and an opportunity to identify students who are not performing well at an early point.

Assessment Cycle Review

A general overview of assessment findings and proposed actions will be available once the 2012-2016 assessment cycle is fully implemented.

Criminal Justice (BA)

Program Learning Assessment. Key findings and proposed actions
(2012-2016)

Program Learning Goals

1. The capacity to critically evaluate ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy decisions.
2. The capacity to critically evaluate the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on criminal justice policy decision.
3. The ability to construct an original research question, manifesting a familiarity with existing literature, and an implementable research design.
4. The ability to implement that research design through the collection and interpretation of data, and to articulate proposals for policy reform.
5. Clarity of expression.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Goal #	% Meet / Exceed ¹	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective? ⁴ Follow-up assessment Sem. Year % Meet / Exceed
2013				
Assessment Context² : CJBA 110 (Pre-test, n=45), CJBA 111 (Post-test, n=15) Tool³ : Multiple Choice, Essay				
		Average performance was better on the post-test (12 out of 25) than the pre-test (8 out of 25). Largest gains came from the essay suggesting the course reinforces critical, analytical, ethical thinking as well as writing.		Sp 14 16.2 of 25
Assessment Context : CJBA 110, Tool : Student Evaluation				
		Evaluations highly favorable with regard to metrics relating to encouragement of critical reasoning.	Monitor this metric in the future.	
2014				
Assessment Context : CJBA 110 (Pre-test), CJBA 111 (Post-test) Tool : Multiple Choice, Essay				
		Substantial gains in average performance on the post-test (16.23 out of 25) compared to the pre-test (10.30 out of 25). Most heartened by the gains on essay scores, which correlate closely with the major's goals of cultivating critical thinking and clarity of expression.	Hold a retreat dedicated to teaching writing. Faculty members to pursue writing intensive certification. Expand the number of writing intensive sections.	
Assessment Context : CJBA 220 Tool : Final Exam				
	87.5	Extremely successful at stating ethical dimensions of problems and approaches to resolve them, as well as racial and ethical dimensions of the problem and a framework for resolution. Biggest weakness was in suggesting how questions might be studied empirically.	Consider if courses (220, research methods) should be re-sequenced or outcome is being measured prematurely. Increase our statistics requirements to a year-long sequence.	

(1) Percent represents ratio of students who met or exceeded expectations. Where scores represent mean performance, the mean score and highest scale value are indicated (e.g., 3.3 out of 4). (2) Assessment context may relate to comprehensive program review, specific academic setting (e.g., course #, capstone, internship), class standing (e.g., seniors, transfers, alumni), post-graduation outcomes (e.g., placement, further education, employers ratings of employee skills), or indicators of learning progress. (3) Examples of tools include exams, portfolios, research projects, lab reports, papers, essays, surveys, licensure tests, performances, presentations. (4) Re-assessment of learning follows the implementation of actions to determine their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Key Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective? Follow-up assessment	
				Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed
2015					
Assessment Context : CJBA 110 (Pre-test, n=42) vs. CJBA 111 (Post-test, n=35), Tool : Multiple Choice, Essay					
		Substantial gains for all but one student participating in the pre-test (average 160) and post-test (average 179). Most heartened by the gains on essay scores, which correlate closely with the major's goals of cultivating critical thinking and clarity of expression.			
Assessment Context : CJBA 220 (n=9), Tool : Final Exam					
		Course overall successful, 88.9 % of students received satisfactory scores. Students extremely successful at stating ethical dimensions of problems and approaches to thinking through how to resolve them. Students also generally successful showing familiarity with prior research.	Develop an advanced research methods course		
Assessment Context : CJBA 340 (n=11), Tool : Final Exam					
		The majority of students received satisfactory scores. As in prior assessments of other courses marshaling data and articulating research designs continue to be a problem area for our students.	At a day long retreat, commitment all our instructors to requiring students to work with original data in all of their lessons.		