

Summary of Internal and External Review Team Reports
The Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections (Administration of Justice)
Fall 2006

The following summarizes the findings of the internal and external review teams that conducted reviews during the Fall semester of 2006.

Internal Review Summary

The Administration of Justice (AJ) undergraduate program is one of the largest in CoLA, with an average of 430 majors, the majority transfer students from two-year programs. The graduate program had an average enrollment of 34 students in the past, but after the department raised entrance standards a year ago, the current enrollment is 12 students. The department currently has 10.25 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty. Two are full professors, 2.25 are associate professors and the remaining six are assistant professors. The department has had five different Directors in the last five years. The department's biggest challenge is managing the large undergraduate instruction demands. Many of the core courses are covered by term faculty, some of whom have been teaching in AJ for many years. At the time of the review, the department had only two support personnel (but were searching for a secretary).

Despite the large instructional load, the faculty moved to a 2-2 teaching load a year ago, as suggested in the last review of the program. Faculty have engaged in a thorough review of the curriculum and developed a long-term Vision Plan, while preparing a thoughtful and all-encompassing Self Study in preparation for this review. Major challenges facing the department:

- Finding a strong director for the program to lead the department in the future
- Hiring and retaining qualified faculty
- Managing the teaching demands of the undergraduate program
- Increasing graduate enrollment while maintaining quality to aid in degree completion
- Controlling the number of undeclared graduate students allowed to take AJ graduate classes
- Resolving the differences in vision between the junior and senior faculty
- Encouraging scholarly production to enhance the department's reputation among peers while still meeting the instructional needs in the undergraduate program
- Enlarging the computer lab to meet student needs
- Finding resources to hire a fourth full-time support person and spruce up the AJ departmental suite

Recommendations for Meeting the Challenges of the Department

- Complete the hiring process for a dynamic department Director
- Increase the faculty in the department to 15 as recommended in the previous review document and in the current external review report
- Under the new Director, devise a method of balancing the undergraduate instructional load while recognizing that research-active faculty may need course reductions
- Build consensus within the department for the future of a non-thesis M.A. Degree and a future Ph.D. program
- Implement an aggressive recruitment plan to increase graduate enrollment without reducing the quality of those admitted

- Work with the CoLA Dean to control the number of undeclared graduate students taking AJ classes; to add one support staff position to the department; to double the size of the student computer lab; and to update the departmental suite

External Review Summary

The external reviewer team identified several areas of strength in the program. These included: the department has a small, dedicated faculty that has managed the large undergraduate enrollment almost too well; both undergraduate and graduate students were positive about the quality of their classes and professors, the quality of advisement, and the accessibility of the faculty to students; the graduate program provides financial support for most students for three semesters and gives most student office space; the faculty has a strong commitment to enhancing the department's reputation for academic and research excellence; and the recently completed strategic plan sets forth sound and attainable goals with respect to faculty research, curricula changes, departmental stature, academic excellence, scholarly productivity and research funding.

Concerns/Recommendations

- The department needs strong new leadership after five years without a permanent Director. A strong new Director will improve faculty morale, garner resources, improve internal/external communication, resolve faculty differences and aid faculty development.
- The number of departmental faculty must be increased to 14 or 15 to handle the large number of undergraduates in the program. This will lessen the tension arising out of the increased research activities of the younger faculty which has resulted in course reductions and even larger classes for faculty with 2-2 teaching loads.
- The graduate program needs to decrease the pre-thesis attrition rate; control the number of non-declared majors in graduate classes; consider adding a non-thesis M.A. to the program; look for course concentration areas with other programs; and improving the infrastructure of the graduate program.
- The strategic plan developed primarily by junior faculty is on "hold" due to the lack of a permanent Director. The plan sets forth sound and attainable goals and the serious pursuit of these goals would be advantageous to the department. The central administration needs to give support to this plan.
- There is a split between most junior faculty and the senior faculty on whether or not the department should pursue a Ph.D. program. There is a demand for more Ph.D. programs in AJ at this time. The senior faculty and the new Director will need to support this move in order for it to succeed. Such a program could help retain the talented and research-active junior faculty and serve to attract strong new faculty members
- The small number of graduate students makes supporting new research projects difficult and the department does not support faculty with external research responsibilities at the level one would expect if the department takes research seriously.
- The new Director will need to build greater consensus around the research mission of the department, supporting faculty buy-outs when appropriate, and finding additional staff support for the various projects.
- The department has at least five very strong faculty members who are attracting grants and research contracts despite the small size of the department. Junior faculty are very supportive of each other but retention of these talented individual needs improvement as eight faculty and one Director have departed since the last program review. The working conditions for the department must be improved and intra-departmental conflicts must be managed, issues of salary compression and teaching loads with course buy-outs must be addressed.