



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Office of the Dean
P.O. Box 6850
Fullerton, CA 92834-6850
T (657) 278-3528 / F (657) 657-278-5898

To: Su Swarat, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

From: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: April 12, 2022

Subject: Dean's Summary and Evaluation of the Criminal Justice BA

The Criminal Justice program is the second largest undergraduate program in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in terms of majors. As of Spring 2022 census, there are 1293 Criminal Justice majors and 136 Criminal Justice minors, and, as the External Review Team notes, the demand from students could grow given the increased popularity of this field. The program consists of fourteen tenured/tenure-track faculty, one full-time lecturer, and several adjunct faculty. Faculty have added even more value to the degree by providing students with High Impact Practice opportunities such as Study Abroad and Study Away programs, service learning experiences, and internship experiences and student/faculty research opportunities that have resulted in co-published articles and co-presented conference presentations. The faculty are not only devoted to their students, they are also highly recognized researchers whose work is sought for publication, presentation, and consultation. Many serve in leadership roles in the profession and have written texts that guide the instruction of the discipline.

We should say at the outset of the Dean's response that while the faculty's devotion to their students and their discipline are undeniable, we are greatly concerned about the External Review Team and PPR Committee's description of the working relationship among faculty, particularly, those who "harshly dismiss the views of others" and who treat others in their department in ways that, as the External Review Team described, "can easily be interpreted as bullying." We have forwarded our concerns to HR and are awaiting their response.

We appreciate the creativity and human and financial resources that the Criminal Justice program has invested, since their last PPR, into helping their students stay enrolled in university and graduate in a timely manner. In a GI 2025 analysis that the College completed in S21, we found that Criminal Justice had increased their four-year first-time student graduation rate by 21% between the Fall 2008 cohort (9%) and the Fall 2016 cohort (30%). Over the same period of time their two-year transfer graduation rates have increased by 20.6%, with 47% of the 2018 transfer cohort graduating in two years, exceeding the GI 2025 goal of 44%. These were hard-earned increases. Since the last PPR the program has run a Criminal Justice Success Academy in collaboration with the Dean's



Office, created a Criminal Justice Peer Mentoring program, and identified an advisor who works with students on Academic Notice.

Moving ahead, we encourage the department to reflect on, and study, which of these practices have made the greatest impact on retention and graduation rates and therefore which practices should be augmented or altered to improve both their four-year graduation rate (which is almost 10% lower than the college average), and their equity gaps. We note that the department has made significant improvement in shrinking their equity gap. Of the first-time freshman students who entered in 2014, underrepresented minorities (URM) graduated in six years at a 4.6% lower rate than students who are classified as non-URM (compared to a 17.3% gap with the 2008 cohort). The transfer three-year graduation rates indicate a reverse equity-gap of 8.8%. It is possible, as the Self Study notes, that the lagging graduation rates for first-time students may be tied to the inability of students to get the courses they need, which should also be studied.

As the department Self Study and External Review Team indicate, student advising must be addressed. The findings of a college working group on advising confirmed that incorporating staff advisors in programs to work in tandem with faculty advisors would benefit students and faculty greatly. The College is piloting such a tandem advising position with four programs in the fall and working to identify and apply for monies that would allow an expansion of this model to Criminal Justice. As we wait to see if we have secured that funding we urge you to pursue hiring a part-time lecturer who will devote more time to advising.

We appreciate the work that the *ad hoc* program committee performed in 20-21 when they rewrote learning objectives and course descriptions to make the critical perspective of their discipline more legible in their program. After reading the Self Study, External Review Team report, and the PPR committee response, we agree that the program would greatly benefit from the assistance of a professional strategic planner to build on and focus this work, a process and timeline we provide at the end of this response.

The PPR Committee and External Review Team note that the program is in need of a more stable, qualified teaching pool. Criminal Justice currently has a tenure density 74.7%. If, as the program suggests in the Department Response, one of the tenure/tenure-track faculty is leaving, they will have a tenure/tenure-track density of 69.3%. The College goal is to have departments at 65% density. Nevertheless, we hear the department and External Review team's argument that Criminal Justice may be a field in which it is particularly hard to find qualified part-time faculty who have the critical perspective required to teach the curriculum. The Dean's Office is open to having a discussion with the program about whether they need a different tenure density than the college norm, and how a higher density may impact other areas of the program. We will need to also discuss the right time to do a hire. Though there may be a critical need for an immediate hire,



waiting until the strategic planning has concluded and until the significant problems with faculty relationships mentioned above have been resolved would allow the program to better determine in which area would be best to hire and also better position you to recruit and retain faculty who will see they will be entering a more solid program.

We also expect that the strategic planning process will identify some ways to fill this instructional void in addition to increasing the number of tenured/tenure-track faculty. For example, might reworking the curriculum allow you to more easily hire qualified people from other fields? Should you consider developing an MA program that could, in part, help your pipeline problem?

To make room for the program to perform this work, the Division Chair and Program Coordinator should work together to review each faculty's service load and transparently work to equalize the service load in a way that will also let all faculty in the program participate in the strategic planning activities. The Dean's Office has been working with all Chairs on workload equity in the Council of Chairs meetings, and it is imperative that the department institute policies and processes that make it clear how each service task is allocated and the service load expectations for all faculty. We acknowledge that establishing workload equity practices is very difficult, and we are here to support the Division in this work.

The Dean's Office will work with the department to identify and hire a strategic planner who will help them productively identify the future direction of the program and develop a clear mission and vision for its future that they use as the bedrock for other crucial discussions: about curriculum, assessment, hiring priorities, and student support. To that end, we propose the following timeline and tasks:

1. May, 2022: Division Chair and Criminal Justice Program Coordinator: Work with the Dean's Office to identify potential strategic planners who could work with the program
2. Summer, 2022: Division Chair, Meet with Pat and identify O&E funds that can be used to hire a strategic planner and execute contract
3. Fall 2022: All Criminal Justice tenure/tenure track faculty participate in the strategic planning work
4. Spring 2023: Mission and vision of the department finalized and plan (including timeline) developed to assess program governance structure and placement, revise curriculum, refine assessment, and set hiring priorities. Program Coordinator arranges a meeting with the Dean's Office to share mission and vision and discuss next steps.

We thank the program for all the work they have put in already in starting the conversation about the future of the program. We are optimistic that with the support of a strategic planner the program will be able to develop a clear and inspiring mission and vision to support a responsive and aligned curriculum, assessment plan, hiring and retention plan, and student support plan .