



Office of the Acting Vice President
For Academic Affairs

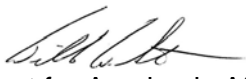
P.O. Box 6910
Radford, Virginia 24142

Phone (540) 831-5404
FAX (540) 831-5142

Email: wstanton@radford.edu

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Isaac Van Patten
Chair, Department of Criminal Justice

FROM: Wilbur W. Stanton 
Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program Review

DATE: 21 August 05

COPY: Dr. Paul Sale, Chair of the Academic Program Review Committee
Academic Program Review Committee Members
Penelope W. Kyle, President
Dr. Ivan Liss, Dean College of Arts and Sciences

Introduction

Academic program review is designed to assure regular examination of the University's curricula and academic structure and guide recommendations for improving academic quality. In addition, the process guides the effective allocation of resources, encourages continuous faculty and program development, and provides a rationale for making decisions about maintaining, enhancing, reconfiguring, or phasing out programs as required by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and/or as indicated through other analyses and by other criteria. Further, the Program Review process provides a tool for working with departments and academic programs to implement the University's Strategic Plan. For the process to be fully effective, departments and programs must commit themselves to following through after the initial self-study and analysis by responding to the recommendations and/or required actions of the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC), the appropriate dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, the APRC and the academic programs under review worked with program review criteria that were approved in April 2003. I commend the Academic Program Review Committee for the diligent, thoughtful review of academic programs and for the

report detailing its study and recommendations. Moreover, I commend each of the academic programs that undertook the self-study required to develop and present reports that allowed the APRC to complete its work.

This memorandum completes the first stage of the Academic Program Review process. Included in this memorandum are the APRC's specific program recommendations for the Criminal Justice Program. Also included are the APRC's overall recommendations.

Observations Pertaining to All Programs in General

I have several general observations that come from the reading of all the program review materials:

1. Programs were encouraged to work with the QEP implementation team in the preparation of this year's reports. Those that did so had superior documentation compared to those that did not work with the team. We need to work together to ensure that programs clearly report results of the implementation of the program's Quality Enhancement Plan. Outcomes should be reported in measurable terms and changes made based upon those outcomes should be noted in the program review reports (see Quality Enhancement Plan Template column "Evidence of Improvements"). To that end, I have asked Ms. Bethany Bodo, in her role as Director of Academic Assessment, to provide, in the form of a fictitious department report, how outcomes can be reported and utilized to enhance programs. When this document has been created, I will make it available to all programs.
2. We need to continue efforts to collect alumni data. For example, helpful information may include alumni employment data, satisfaction with the program, and recommendations for improvement. This information is burdensome for individual programs to collect and maintain. Therefore, I am working with the Division of Institutional Research to enhance University coordination with programs and thus facilitate centralization of the data for program use during review processes. The APRC committee recommended that this information be gathered in possibly 1, 3, and 5 year intervals. While this would be robust and useful for program enhancement, the ability for the university to implement this will be dependent upon faculty workloads and the capacity for Institutional Research to design, gather, analyze, and disseminate resulting data. At a minimum, however, this must be part of every program review cycle meaning that alumni data must be collected once every five years as part of the self-study.
3. Finally, programs continue to make good cases for faculty and staff needs. It will remain increasingly important in a continuing environment of constrained resources that Radford University use the academic program review process to contribute to the determination of how to most effectively deploy available resources. We will continue to use the state's rubric (Schedule M) as a major determinant of workload expectations, but this metric alone cannot fully capture the uniqueness of a program and its centrality or contribution to the mission of the University. During the next academic year, I will work with the Council of Deans to explore a more inclusive set of workload criteria while retaining the state's workload principles.

Observations for the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program

The following observations, recommendations, and conclusions are based on my review of APRC's analysis and Program Review Report, the self-study of the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program submitted by the Department of Criminal Justice, and the comments and recommendations submitted by Dean Liss.

The Undergraduate Criminal Justice self-study was well written, comprehensive, and provided exceptional detail in regard to the analysis, interpretation, and conclusions reached from data available to the program.

The Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program has made both a significant and positive contribution to the College of Arts and Sciences and to the University as a whole. The undergraduate Criminal Justice program continues to be the largest program in the College of Arts and Sciences and one of the largest in the university; and enrollment trends in the major have increased since the last program review cycle. A survey of Criminal Justice majors, administered in 2003, indicated that 50% of majors chose Radford University because of the reputation of the program. Because no other university in western Virginia offers the Criminal Justice major, and because graduating students with this major are very employable, it is anticipated that RU's program will continue to be in high demand.

I was particularly impressed by the extent to which the Program carefully addressed the concerns and recommendations resulting from the previous program review, which was done in 1997-98. The self study included evidence of responding to the previous program in such areas as:

- a. Improved management of internships
- b. Developed the forensics option
- c. Increased opportunities for international experiences

I was also impressed by the degree to which the faculty have been active professionally while maintaining a teaching and learning emphasis. The faculty accomplishments have included four books, 56 juried articles, and 47 national presentations over the review period.

Schedule M calculations included by the department in the report indicate that the faculty is teaching an average number of credit hours slightly higher than that recommended by SCHEV (as based on an assumption that 80% of student credit hours will be taught by full-time faculty).

The department has promoted enhanced student engagement by working to increase career awareness through career seminars, encouraging and developing a service learning component in the curriculum, increasing the effectiveness of advising, and developing a student chapter of a Criminal Justice club.

I commend the program discussing assessment and then collecting information/data to support assessment conclusions.

As noted by the Committee, there are three areas that raised some concern and questions, and I concur with these.

1. There appears to be a clear need to increase the full time faculty to keep up with the steadily increasing enrollments (at least as suggested by recent enrollment trend, p. 32).

2. Given the popularity of the forensics studies minor, a case has been made for a forensics lab. Have resources been pursued?
3. Has a cooperative arrangement in forensics been discussed with NRCC or VT?
4. The ratio of interns-to-faculty is high and does not conform to ACJS standards.
5. Limited number of faculty hold the terminal degree in Criminal Justice or closely related degree with the concentration in Criminal Justice.

Recommendations and Conclusions for the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program

During the next decade there will be an increased emphasis on practical applications of academic theories to "real world" problem-oriented environments; continued integration of subject areas via cross-functional and cross-discipline teaching and learning; added emphasis on "people skills" in all aspects of education; and the movement from passive to active learning.

1. The Committee noted that enrollment demands have stretched faculty resources and recommend that current enrollment and staffing issues must be addressed. I concur. The UG Criminal Justice Program is a strong and dynamic program with great potential for increased effectiveness. I encourage you to monitor enrollment trends carefully, and to work with your dean to proactively address faculty and related staffing needs. Last year Dean Liss was authorized to hire an additional faculty member in Criminal Justice, and that faculty member will begin this fall. In addition, I have authorized Dean Liss to open a search for another faculty member to begin in the fall of 2006. I concur with the recommendation of Dean Liss in that the "department should develop a long range staffing plan that reflects its needs in its undergraduate and graduate programs and in its service to the region and state." While the faculty in the department are all contributing to the success of the Program, only one of tenured/tenure track faculty member holds a terminal degree in Criminal Justice. As noted by Dean Liss, the remainder of the faculty hold terminal degrees in related fields (anthropology, political science, history, psychology, sociology, etc.). It seems appropriate to have a balance of faculty with degrees in Criminal Justice and related and supporting disciplines. Therefore, the next faculty hires should require a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice or Criminology. As the program builds its faculty, consideration should be given to the forensic studies minor and associated coursework.
2. I concur with the APRC in that I encourage the Criminal Justice Program to pursue plans for garnering resources adequate for building a forensics and/or crime scene lab to support the forensics studies minor. I also encourage the Program to continue to forge relationships in the forensics area with NRCC and VT as appropriate.
3. Finally, I concur with the APRC that the ratio of interns-to-faculty should be reduced down to 15-1 more closely conforming to ACJS standards.

I commend the APRC for making recommendations whose intentions are clearly to strengthen the undergraduate program in the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Department.

It is essential that that faculty in the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program immediately undertake the work required to secure these improvements. In doing so, the Department

Chairperson and the faculty members in the Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program should work collaboratively and persistently with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to make the changes and improvements that are recommended.

Following the Program Review Guidelines, “the Department Chair or Program Coordinator will submit a report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and appropriate Dean(s) on or before April 1 [2006], indicating how the program has addressed recommendations of the Academic Program Review Committee and any recommendations from the Dean(s) or Vice President for Academic Affairs.”

This document should include findings and results from the initial implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and an updated QEP table (see page 3 of the Program Review Guidelines) that includes a completed “evidence of improvement” column. Programs are expected to discuss methodologies utilized and any challenges encountered during the process. They should also elaborate on ways in which they utilized the findings for program improvement and note programmatic decisions that have been made as a result of the implementation. All programs should document the QEP implementation process and keep this information, including any pertinent data, on file and accessible.

In conclusion, the Undergraduate Criminal Justice program is a viable program that meets SCHEV productivity standards and should be maintained.