

## **Memorandum**

Date: 15 March 2012

To: University Senate

From: Thomas A. Discenna, Chair  
Senate Planning & Review Committee

Re: Proposal for a BA in Criminal Justice

The Senate Planning Review Committee (SPRC) reviewed the proposal from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for a new degree program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice. The SPRC read, reviewed and discussed the proposal and offers the following summary and conclusions.

### Summary

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) proposes a new program leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, building on the department's existing concentration in criminal justice. The department has identified four goals for the program, including: providing OU students with in-depth study of criminology and criminal justice; offering a multifaceted education through interdisciplinary association with other CAS units as well as the School of Business (SBA); "offering a distinctive undergraduate curriculum that is theoretically-grounded, empirically-rigorous, and policy oriented;" creation of a program that emphasizes skills afforded by the liberal arts tradition and the CJ curriculum. The proposed major contains a six CJ specializations including: Law Enforcement, Courts, Corrections and Treatment, Juvenile Justice, Information Security and Assurance, and Homeland Security.

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology intends to implement this program upon approval of this proposal and beginning in the fall of 2012. The BA-CJ is projected to begin with 25 students, adding approximately 50 students per academic year until reaching a steady state of 250 students in the fifth year. The Department projects that these students will be drawn both from the current CJ concentration but also from prospective high school and community college transfer students. There are currently no four-year CJ programs in Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair counties and the Department has increased its presence in Macomb County through participation in the Anton Frankel Center in Mt. Clemens.

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology rationalizes this program on the basis of serving the University's 2020 Vision. The Department maintains that the BA-CJ will contribute to making OU a "destination school known for its distinctive undergraduate experience" due to the program's emphasis on "combined classroom and community-based experience." Similarly, the new program will contribute to the University's goal of developing Professional Education programs that meet marketplace demands for entry-

level positions in federal, state and local levels of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the CJ program will contribute to the goal of engaging Community Partnerships through its internships with local law enforcement, judicial, correctional and business agencies. The BA-CJ is also intended to serve goal of providing a “Student-Centeredness” through its defining features of interdisciplinary study, internship experience and capstone requirement with a strong “research policy focus.” Finally, the Department argues that the new program will contribute to the growth of the institution, citing strong student demand for CJ programs and growth in CJ related careers.

The Department has identified a number of peer institutions locally (e.g., Wayne State University, University of Detroit-Mercy), statewide (e.g., Michigan State University, Grand Valley State University), and regionally (Cleveland State University, Indiana State University, University of Missouri-St. Louis) that offer degree programs in Criminal Justice. The design of the program at OU is consistent with these institutions but differentiates itself on the basis of offering a BA-CJ of its three distinctive features including interdisciplinary study, internship experience and the required capstone.

The CJ concentration currently relies on three tenure-line faculty, one special lecturer and two lecturers. These faculty will provide for the core of the major as it is rolled out. The Department anticipates the need for three tenure-line positions with specializations in CCJ as well as two positions with statistical and methodological specializations and one administrative professional for coordinating the internship program. The department argues that additional resource needs will be “modest” including an increase in the library budget, moderate equipment upgrades and facilities expansion that will be offset by offerings at the Anton Frankel Center.

The SPRC has identified the following items as strengths and weaknesses of this proposal.

#### Strengths

1. The committee finds that, based on the success of the CJ concentration and the projections of student demand provided by the department, there is strong demand for a degree program in Criminal Justice. In other words, the program proposed here should indeed facilitate the growth of the institution.
2. Further, the committee accepts the rationale for job growth provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Department has provided sufficient evidence that there is employment demand for holders of this degree.
3. The SPRC also believes that the claims made by the Department for interdisciplinarity are fully realized in the proposal. In short, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology has realized the goal of interdisciplinary study in a manner entirely consistent with the committee’s understanding of the term.
4. The committee finds that the proposed program draws appropriate on current faculty expertise and that the projections for further growth are similarly reasonable and appropriate.

5. The SPRC further finds that the program being proposed here to be both consistent with and distinctive with peer institutions. The committee believes that this program will be competitive with other schools both locally and regionally.

6. The committee finds that, on the whole, this proposal is consistent with OU's mission and the 2020 strategic initiative.

#### Concerns

The only significant concern identified by the SPRC relates to the specialization in "Information Security and Assurance." The committee has identified the following issues as being particularly problematic:

1. There is no formal relationship between the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Decision and Information Sciences department of the School of Business Administration. The committee is concerned that without such a formal relationship curricular changes could be made to the MIS minor in ways that negatively impact the BA-CJ.

2. The SPRC is not convinced that the collection of courses provided by the MIS minor realizes the goal of preparing students for the kind of roles envisioned by the BA-CJ proposal.

With these in mind, the SPRC by a vote of 6-0 supports the Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice.