

Bachelor of Science In Criminal Justice (BSCJ)

Program Review:

Executive Summary 2021

Program Overview and Review Process

The Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice (BSCJ) program was first offered at Los Angeles Pacific University (then Azusa Pacific University College) in 2015, and was the first undergraduate academic program developed solely by APUC. At the time it was developed, the mission of the program was to meet a perceived need in the marketplace for such a degree, as well to meet a perceived need of the university to increase and diversify its degree program offerings. Program curriculum was shaped in part by a BSCJ Advisory Council consisting of various individuals in career fields within criminal justice. It is part of the social sciences, and students may select from a variety of concentrations including clinical psychology, criminal behavior, cultural psychology, and human services.

Goals for the 120-unit program include preparing students for either entry into a number of career fields related to criminal justice (such as criminology, law enforcement, courts, and corrections), or for advancement within their chosen career field. Students are also able to continue their studies in graduate programs in criminal justice, criminology, law, public administration, or related fields. The Public Administration advisory council aided in the development of LAPU's Masters in Public Administration degree program as a means to offer students an advanced degree.

In July of 2021, Dr. John Washataka, full-time faculty member, agreed to provide support for leading the BSCJ Program Review. The first step was to form a subcommittee of the broader public administration advisory committee. The subcommittee comprised Mr. Gary Clifford, Dr. Latricia Kyle, and Mr. Mark Murtha. The subcommittee engaged in a competitive analysis as a first step in the process. The BSCJ Program Review report was completed in August of 2022. There was a deadline of August 18, 2022 for the internal reviewers to complete their review of the Internal Rubric for the BSCJ Program Review. The internal review committee put forth recommendations for external reviewers. The external reviewers completed the review of the rubric and met with the internal review committee on November 2, 2022. The internal committee was interested in sharing the recommendations with the broader Public Administration Advisory Council for input. On February 17, 2023 the Public Administration Advisory Council met to provide input about the internal and external recommendations.

Summary

The BSCJ program review process included independent evaluations of the BSCJ program by three internal reviewers (i.e., the program review committee) and two external reviewers. The results of those evaluations are provided in the [CRJU Program Review Rubric to Assess Program Quality](#). Reviewers 1, 2, and 3 are internal reviewers, while reviewers 4 and 5 are the external reviewers.

Findings

Curriculum and Learning Environment

Strengths

The program overview from the catalog identifies three characteristics of the program: first, it provides a discipline specific education related to the field of criminal justice; second, it does so in a Christ-centered context that provides development of a Christian worldview; and third, the education prepares students for either a career in criminal justice, or further studies. The program is consistent with both the university mission and purpose in that it provides a Christ-centered education and, by doing so, creates a sense of hope in the future for its students. The program has a strong foundational curriculum that addresses the breadth and depth of the field of discipline of criminal justice.

Areas for Improvement

There is an opportunity to improve the curriculum by updating it to include current topics and trends in the field of criminal justice. There are also opportunities to more closely align the Program Learning Outcomes with the Course Learning Outcomes.

Recommendations

The primary recommendation for this area includes the modification of core courses in the criminal justice program to address emerging trends in the field. The secondary recommendation includes more closely aligning the program learning outcomes and the course learning outcomes.

Student Learning and Success

Strengths

This section on student learning and success considers several indicators to address the level of learning and success LAPU students achieve. While both “success” and “learning” may by nature be hard to measure, the indicators provide at least partial insights into how well the BSCJ students perform.

The indicators include results from: 1) annual PLO assessments; 2) data related to faith, life, and learning; 3) grade distribution by course and instructor; 4) disaggregated course pass rates; and 5) completion and graduation rates.

Four ethnic groups, American Indian or Alaska Native (83.3%); Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (88.5); Two or more races (92); and White (86.6) achieved higher course pass rates than the overall average of 83.1%; while Asians (76.3); Black or African American (83); Hispanics of any race (83); and Race and Ethnicity unknown (61.2) fell below the overall average.

A statistical analysis comparing the means of the course pass rates by ethnicity revealed a significant difference between the course pass rates of the “Unknown” group and three other groups (Hawaiian, Two or more ethnicities, and White), indicating that the Unknown ethnicity group is passing courses at a significantly lower rate than the other age groups. However, given 1) the group number is only about 3% of the total BSCJ enrollment; and 2) the group profile of “unknown” makes it difficult to draw any inferences, the statistical significance was not deemed relevant.

Areas for Improvement

Female students' pass rates were significantly lower than male pass rates for the criminal justice program. It is difficult to assess the career success of students without a systematic approach to alumni surveys.

Recommendations

The recommendation for this section includes further exploration of the challenges impacting female students, a peer mentoring program for at-risk students, and a systematic approach to alumni surveys in order to better understand the outcomes from students after graduation.

Faculty

Strengths

One of the strengths of the LAPU faculty was the high rate of earned doctorate degrees among faculty teaching in this discipline. [Faculty academic and professional qualifications](#) include holding at least a master's degree in the field for undergraduate programs, and a doctoral degree for graduate programs. As indicated in the table "Credits and enrollments taught, by terminal degree" in the full report, terminally degreed instructors have taught over 75% of all credits. Historically, the program has used 10 faculty who have earned doctoral degrees, and two who have earned master's degrees.

There are no accreditation standards for the proportion of terminal vs. non-terminal degreed instructors, nor are there standards for the proportion of full-time versus adjunct program faculty. At this time, LAPU has no full-time faculty teaching in the program. University hiring standards for full-time faculty include the ratio of one full-time faculty for every 100 undergraduate program FTE students.

Areas for Improvement

Given the student demographics, Hispanic/Latino and African American adjunct faculty members are underrepresented. There is not a full-time faculty member assigned to this program.

Recommendations

There is a recommendation to continue to prioritize the hiring of faculty members in this program with the student demographics of enrolled students in the program. There is also a recommendation to hire a full-time faculty member at the point at which enrollments exceed 100 FTE students for three consecutive terms (8-week terms).

Program Viability and Sustainability

Strengths

The number of units for the degree and the cost to attain the degree at LAPU are competitive in comparison to other universities in the marketplace. Job opportunities in public administration/criminal justice are continuing to increase in both the local area (LA County) and also nationally. The overall student headcount increased from 9 students in 2014-15 to 101 students in 2020-21.

Areas for Improvement

The enrolments fell below 100 students after the 2020-21 year. There is not a full-time faculty member who is assigned to the program.

Recommendations

The university needs to continue to explore ways to promote the criminal justice program in order to increase enrollments. The hiring of a full time faculty member in this program would assist in increasing the visibility for the program.

Summary Recommendations:

Internal:

1. Align Program Learning Outcomes more closely with Course Learning Outcomes
2. Further assess the challenges that may be impacting female students in the CRJU program, which is resulting in lower grades for females versus males.
3. Update the ethics course in CRJU and other courses as appropriate to include the topics of critical race theory and systemic racism (contemporary issues) in the United States.
4. Implement training for CRJU faculty to facilitate discussions with students about critical race theory and systemic racism (contemporary issues) in the United States.

External:

1. Align Program Learning Outcomes more closely with Course Learning Outcomes
2. Consider peer-mentorship program for high-risk student populations- faculty, students, alumni
3. Update the criminal justice curriculum for relevancy and currency (contemporary issues)
4. Hire at least one full-time faculty for the discipline of criminal justice
5. Implement a systematic approach to alumni surveys

Goals and Implementation Schedule

The Program Review Committee reviewed the external recommendations from the external reviewers for a peer mentorship program systematic alumni surveys but determined that these two recommendations were outside the scope of the BSCJ program review.

The Program Review Committee agreed upon the following goals and implementation schedule:

Goals

1. Increase the hiring of Hispanic/Latino and African American faculty members in order to align with the student demographics
2. Update curriculum to include current trends and issues in the field of criminal justice
3. Align Program Learning Outcomes more closely with Course Learning Outcomes
4. Provide training for criminal justice faculty about how to facilitate difficult discussions

5. Hire a full-time faculty member to provide visibility and support for the CJRU degree program at the point at which enrollments exceed 100 FTE students for three consecutive sessions.

Implementation Schedule

1. Prioritize the hiring of Hispanic/Latino and African American adjunct faculty members during the 2023/24 academic year
2. Revise three CJRU courses in the 2023/24 academic year in order to address current trends and issues to include: CRJU 105 (Introduction to Criminal Justice); CRJU 340 (Critical Issues in Criminal Justice); and CRJU 350 (Criminal Justice Ethics).
3. Align Program Learning Outcomes more closely to Course Learning Outcomes as part of the curriculum update plan by the end of academic year 2025-26.
4. Implement at least one training with all BSCJ faculty during the 2023-24 academic year about how to facilitate difficult discussions with students around the topics of critical race theory and systemic racism.
5. Post full-time faculty position for criminal justice when enrollments exceed 100 FTE students for three consecutive sessions (8-week terms).

Conclusion/Final Comments

The CJRU program has a solid foundation of core courses in the curriculum. The student demographic for this program is 60 percent Hispanic/Latino. There was not a significant difference in the grades of minority students in comparison with their White counterparts. However, there is an opportunity to hire more Hispanic/Latino and African American faculty members in order to more closely align the faculty and student demographics. Approximately 75 percent of the courses for this program were taught by doctorally-qualified faculty. Three CRJU courses have been prioritized for a major course revision in order to ensure that the curriculum includes current trends.