College: Fairmount College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department/Program (s):   School of Community Affairs

Degree (s) Offered: B.S. in Criminal Justice and Forensic Science; M.A. in Criminal Justice

Triggers: Forensic Science for low majors and graduates (program is 6 years old). Degrees and majors in criminal justice exceed minima.

Brief Description of Degree Programs:
The bachelor's degree program in Criminal Justice prepares graduates for entry level positions in the criminal justice environment. A social science perspective for the causes of crime, the law and the judicial system forms the curricular framework. Internships and cooperative education provide the practical components of the program. An ethical framework, critical thinking and writing skills are inherent in the program.

The graduate program in Criminal Justice builds on the bachelor's program with increasing depth in the study of crime and the justice system. The goal is preparation of graduates ready for "…leadership, policymaking, research and instruction" within the "criminal justice field."

This B.S. in Forensic Science is a new program (approved 2005) and is the only undergraduate program in Kansas that prepares students for forensic investigation. Following basic science courses, students participate in actual crime investigation and in the development of crime reports as part of two capstone courses. Practitioners as adjunct faculty/lectures are the teachers for these courses.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:
B.S. Criminal Justice – Three major outcomes are described in the report. Measurements of these outcomes were done through completion of course work. Other measures are not described. Faculties review material from courses, as well as available surveys and anecdotal accounts from graduates and external groups. The outcomes are specific enough that an assessment outside the actual course work would seem to be possible.

M.A. Criminal Justice – The outcomes are in the same general three areas described for the undergraduate program with the requirement of advanced proficiency, comprehensive knowledge, and advanced understanding. Measurement of outcomes is only through course work. The Graduate School review emphasized this point and encouraged additional measures of outcomes.

B.S. in Forensic Science – There are three outcomes described in the report. Only one outcome is related directly to students, i.e., beginning skill in analysis of crime scenes including identification of evidence for court proceedings and testifying. This outcome is measured through the two capstone courses only. There is also an outcome related to the basic science foundation. No information about evaluation of this outcome is included. The third outcome

describes partnerships with discipline organizations. This outcome relates primarily to the program and its faculty more than to student learning. No assessment of this outcome is provided.

Placement of Graduates:
Limited data on the placement of graduates from all three programs are provided. There is a promise to increase these kinds of data in the next reporting period. Information provided is a survey of the two undergraduate programs. The number of respondents is very low (e.g., 26 for 2008 and 18 for 2009). The documentation of need from the Bureau of Labor Statistics does not seem to differentiate levels of practice (Bachelor versus master) for the two criminal justice programs. The department reports that 12 graduates of the master's program (17%) since 2008 have been admitted to PhD or JD programs. Since the forensic science program is new with a limited number of graduates, an assessment of the placements of these graduates would seem to be warranted.

Sources of External Support: External funding of almost 1.9 million dollars from 2008-2010

Conclusions:
  Commendations:
- External funding of almost 1.9 million dollars from 2008-2010
- Faculty scholarly activities and teaching awards.
- Stable enrollments with over 10,000 SCH per FY.
- Increases in on-line opportunities for students (limited description in the document)
- Development of options through the WSU complete program (limited description in the document.)
- Connections and working relationships with the practitioners and community leaders.

  Prior to the next review in 2014:
- Consider staffing issues in the Forensic Science program. The program is operated with adjunct faculty as identified by the School and the Dean. The apparent dependence of the program on adjuncts for essentially all of the discipline-specific content is of concern. The leadership for this program is not described but appears to be a faculty member with other responsibilities, both administrative and teaching. Full time leadership by a person with expertise in the area of forensic science would be beneficial for the School and the students.
- Data should be collected and evaluated in terms of student perceptions about the program. The University implemented an electronic undergraduate and graduate student exit survey in 2011 (by program) for this purpose.
- Data should be collected and evaluated from all program graduates to include salary, employment location, and employment in the field. The University is implementing an alumni survey (by program) for this purpose in 2012.

By April 1, 2012 (send to the Office of the Provost):

- Efforts should be made to document that the program review process is a part of a continuous improvement approach involving all departmental faculty.
- The learning outcomes for all degree programs should be further developed and a revised assessment process needs to be implemented with the following components:
  - Learning Outcomes: Statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. These relate to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students acquire through their program (e.g., graduates will demonstrate advanced writing ability).
  - Assessment Methods: Direct measures used to identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes (e.g., writing project evaluated by a rubric).
  - Targets: Expectations of students to achieve the desired outcome to demonstrate program effectiveness (e.g., 90% of students will demonstrate at least the benchmark performance on a project).
  - Results: Actual achievement on each measurement (e.g., 94% of the students achieved at least the benchmark performance on the project).
  - Analysis: An evaluation that determines the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved and leads to decisions and actions to improve the program. The analysis and evaluation should align with specific learning outcomes and consider whether the measurement and target remain valid indicators of the learner.
- General education expectations should be further developed (and assessed) for both program UG majors and non-majors.
  - To measure student learning, assess a representative sample of student assignments (e.g., for writing or critical thinking abilities) using a rubric from selected courses (pre, at the beginning of semester and post, at the end).
  - Utilize processes listed above to evaluate the outcomes.