

University of Tennessee – Chattanooga (UTC)
Criminal Justice Program Review
(B.S. and M.S.)
Department of Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies

Submitted by:



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Introduction

Qualifications

I received my Ph.D. in Sociology, with a significant focus on criminology and social differentiation in 1995. I served on the faculty of the Administration of Justice program at Pennsylvania State University from 1995-1998, on the faculty at Georgia State University from 1998-2014, and on faculty as Department Chair in the Criminal Justice and Criminology program at Georgia Southern University (GS) from 2014-2019. I served as the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Research for the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences since 2019. I served as a coordinator of undergraduate programs, on graduate curriculum committees at GSU and merged curricula across institutions with the merger of GS and Armstrong University in 2019. While this is the first external review I have conducted, I have experience on the other side of the program review process, both in drafting reports, working with external reviewers, and addressing reviewer concerns. I know faculty in this program through meetings in the discipline and note that I have served on faculty with one of the faculty members at UT-C.

Reviewer Experience

It is important to provide a quick outline of the planning and actual review experience. I was initially asked to do this review in November of 2019; initial dates under consideration for review were in late January, early February and in March. We agreed on a visit from March 16-18. By this date, COVID-19 precluded travel from Georgia and the UT-C campus requested continuance as well. Ultimately the review was conducted Wednesday-Thursday, May 20-21, 2020 via Zoom. I had one initial meeting with Dr. Purkey and Ms. Karen McGuffee to gather planning information on Tuesday, May 19, 2020. I utilized data provided on both programs via email, as well as information gathered from my discussions with CAS Dean Joe Wilferth, Interim Vice Provost Matt Matthews, CJ faculty and staff, the CJ Department Head, Dr. Lynn Purkey and Associate Department Head Ms. Karen McGuffee, and the Dean of the Library, Theresa Liedtka. While I was scheduled to meet with students, none appeared during my Zoom session.

The inability to travel to the site left me unable to assess facilities, omitted some meetings initially scheduled, and likely is the reason that I was unable to meet with students from either program level. Hence, assessments on these elements should be somewhat cautiously interpreted as they solely rely on information from faculty and documentation.

Structure of report

This report is organized by the standards provided to the reviewer; I also drew on the “Standards for College/University Criminal Justice/Criminology Baccalaureate Degree Programs” from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (last amended 8/28/2018, retrievable from ACJS.org) as I evaluated the UG program. I begin with a quick summary of the context for the programs. I then structure the report drawing on the assessment checklist, providing context for these determinations. Findings are embedded for both the Undergraduate Program (UG) and the Graduate Program (G) under subheadings for each standard: *Learning Outcomes*, *Curriculum*,

Student Experience, Faculty, Learning Resources, and Support. Under each standard I provide summaries of the strengths and opportunities, weaknesses/ areas of growth, and recommendations for each program as warranted. I complete the report with a discussion of overall considerations and a streamlined set of recommendations/considerations for the Department and its programs.

Context for Unit: Change

Criminal Justice was a free standing program from 2003 through 2015, after previously existing as a program within the School of Social and Community Services. In the fall of 2015, the Criminal Justice program again merged into a mixed unit department, the Department of Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies (with programs in Sociology and Anthropology, each with undergraduate degree programs and minors, and Geography, which offers only a minor). Criminal Justice is the only unit in the Department to offer a graduate program as well an online UG degree opportunity. While the merged department has existed for five years, a period of overall fluctuation has had its impacts. A key to my assessment was understanding this larger context.

Notably, fluctuations occurred over this time period in upper level administration, with the Dean who called for the merger of this Unit into the larger Department as part of a larger set of unit consolidations departing the institution. This position was then held by an interim dean for one year, who then became an interim provost. The position of Provost has since been filled. Meanwhile, the position of Dean was filled by a new interim dean; a new external Dean has been hired, starting fall 2020. I note that each of the administrators to whom I spoke clearly held the program and its faculty in high regard, which each pursuing best ways to serve the Unit's programs, students and faculty, and seeking suggestions for potential directions for the Unit, as well as recognizing its productivity during this period of change.

Leadership of the CJC Unit also fluctuated over this period. After a long tenure of leadership, under the prior chair, Dr. Tammy Garland assumed and served as Department Chair from 2015-2018. This position was relinquished upon the merge, with Dr. Pamela Ashmore, a Professor of Anthropology, assuming leadership of the Department. Last year the Department commenced with a search for an external Department Chair, but the search ultimately failed as a result of COVID-19-related factors.

Turnover not only occurred in leadership, but also among the Unit's faculty. Additional discussion will be provided later in my report, but in sum it appears that in spring 2017, the Unit had 12 faculty members, declining to 10 in fall 2017, and to 9 by fall 2018. Meanwhile, reliance on adjuncts increased over this period, shifting from 10 in 2017, to 11 in 2018, and 13 and 16 in spring 2019 and fall 2019 respectively. Seven of the nine faculty currently in residence have been on faculty since fall 2017, with one faculty member joining in fall 2018 and a second in fall 2019. It is my understanding that two additional faculty members have been hired and are set to begin in fall 2020. Thus, over 30% of the faculty in the Unit in fall 2020 will have been on

faculty three or fewer years. Notably, faculty who left the Unit did so for a myriad of reasons, and remaining faculty appear to form a cohesive unit.

Finally, the Criminal Justice Unit shifted spaces during this period, while faculty in other Departmental units remained in place. The faculty, to a person, noted that they are now happy in their current space, but moving required significant messaging to their constituents about where they were. A new shift of physical space appears to be on the horizon for them, per conversations with higher level administrators.

Standards

This report primarily is primarily aimed at providing context and voice to my responses to the items on your assessment rubrics. In this section, I provide an overview summary of the findings, focusing first on the

1. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following criteria were utilized to examine SLOs for **both undergraduate and graduate programs**:

- 1.1 Program and SLOs are clearly identified and measurable (Good)*
- 1.2 Uses appropriate evidence to evaluate achievement of program and SLOs (Excellent)*
- 1.3 Uses information from program evaluation and SLOs to engage in continuous improvement (Excellent/Good)*
- 1.4 Aligns with institutional mission (Excellent)*

Per ACJS standards, I note that the Criminal Justice B.S. program clearly articulates SLOs that include mastery of knowledge of the field (SLOs-1 and 2), methods of inquiry (SLO-4), and skills necessary for understanding and analyzing causes of crime, responses to crime, and consequences overall (SLOs-3,5, and 6).

SLOs are comprehensive and clearly directed at preparing students (at both levels of programs) who either want careers in the field or who wish to advance their careers. Measurements utilized to assess SLOs are appropriate and meet disciplinary standards. The Unit has clearly mapped SLOs to both required and elective coursework, addressing the prior reviewer's concerns. The report reveals that faculty regularly engage in reviews of coursework and SLOs to improve course delivery and content to ensure that student learning is enhanced. Faculty have been creative in the development of assessment protocols.

Student evaluations provide significant and substantive support that the program and faculty are clearly articulating course SLOs and tying content to SLOs in courses. As well, the learning outcomes identified in the programs align with the University and college missions (recommendations to strengthen are presented below).

I do want to make a couple of points regarding the presentation of the B.S. program SLOs, with consideration of growth models recommended for learning scaffolding. First, in its current form, SLOs 1 and 3 really have more than one SLO embedded. For example, SLO1 includes: Identifying themes, applying theories in crime and criminal justice, and applying social and policy implications of themes. These are really three different outcomes, and levels of understanding are crossed within, as well as across, topics. For example, "identify" references

knowledge and application, while “apply” reflects more advanced skillsets. SLO3 is likewise complex, indicating “application” of knowledge of the criminal justice system and understanding the role of ethics. I would recommend separating ethics into a different SLO, particularly given the current context of how ethics are playing out in the criminal justice system context. As I noted in my discussion with the faculty, I also find the difference between SLO 5 and 6 to be unclear. Finally, ACJS standards and this institution’s and college’s missions each reference the importance of communication skills, both written and oral. It may be worthwhile to consider adding a SLO that captures this as a desired outcome. Coursework is clearly accomplishing the task, so it would be useful to include.

Graduate learning outcomes also are complex as phrased, particularly # 3, # 4 if separate and together), and 5 and 6 as well. These minor recommendations are thus offered:

- a. Consider clarifying SLOs 5 and 6 or combining them.
- b. Consider simplifying all SLOs to keep at specific levels of Bloom’s taxonomy within a single SLO.
- c. Ensure appropriate mix of levels of outcomes ranging from knowledge to critical thinking across SLOs (but not within).
- d. Given current context and import of the discipline, consider the role of diversity beyond cultural sensitivity.
- e. Consider inclusion of “life-long learning” or similar growth trajectory language in order to be even further in-line with university and college missions.

2. CURRICULA

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for undergraduate and graduate programs:

<i>2.1</i>	<i>Curricula content/organization are regularly reviewed to yield improvement</i>	<i>(Good/-)</i>
<i>2.2</i>	<i>Ensure courses are regularly offered for timely degree progression</i>	<i>(Good-)</i>
<i>2.3/2.4</i>	<i>Incorporate pedagogical/technological innovations to enhance student learning</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>
<i>2.4/2.8</i>	<i>Aligns and contributes to program mastery and SLOs</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for the undergraduate programs:

<i>2.5</i>	<i>Reflects current standards/practices/issues in discipline</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>
<i>2.6</i>	<i>Fosters analytical and critical thinking and problem-solving</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>
<i>2.7</i>	<i>Provides students with foundation</i>	<i>(Good)</i>
<i>2.8</i>	<i>Progressively challenges students for careers/advanced study</i>	<i>(Good)</i>
<i>2.9</i>	<i>Develops written and oral communication skills</i>	<i>(Good)</i>
<i>2.10</i>	<i>Exposes to discipline-specific research strategies</i>	<i>(Good)</i>

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for the graduate program:

<i>2.3</i>	<i>Students advance beyond UG programming</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>
<i>2.5</i>	<i>Includes disciplinary literature knowledge</i>	<i>(Excellent)</i>
<i>2.6</i>	<i>Offers engagement in research, practice and training</i>	<i>(Good)</i>
<i>2.7</i>	<i>Evaluates distance education regularly</i>	<i>(n.a.)</i>

To begin, I note that while part of a larger, multi-disciplinary department, this Unit very much functions autonomously, making decisions about program design and curriculum delivery within the Unit. This is appropriate. The Unit has undertaken numerous reviews of their programs’ curricula, with the most recent major revision occurring after the last program review. The

reports address changes initiated to respond to the last reviewer's comments, and my review of their current curriculum does not yield any major concerns. Instead, the Unit is complimented on the work done to review and streamline the curricula. Their engagement in curriculum mapping did an excellent job of identifying and eliminating redundancy and overlapping of courses, ultimately streamlining the process for students. It was noted that last year the Unit went an additional step, developing career maps to depict how what students learn assist in developing a career path. The Dean noted that these are widely utilized.

Student evaluations provide evidence that courses require critical thinking at or above other courses in the department, college, and university (95% agreement), and require active engagement in their own learning (89%), also above department, college, and other university courses. Additional supporting evidence also supports this finding.

Written skills are clearly addressed through courses in the curriculum. Indeed, I find it notable that the Department reports that *all* 3000/4000 level classes in the BS degree have a major writing assignment. This is impressive. The report notes that it is difficult to add the oral requirements with large classes in particular. I agree, but encourage the program to consider how this outcome could be strategically included.

The four required courses for the B.S. clearly reflect the skills and foundational knowledge determined important by the Institution and the Unit, with two research methods courses, which require development of basic and more advanced skill sets progressively and application of these skills. Also required are a theory course and a diversity-related course. These courses are followed by a set of electives that further expand students' knowledge beyond the baseline in areas of policing, courts and law, corrections, offending, policy and response, and special populations. The curriculum, if continually offering electives on a rotating basis, allows students to develop specializations in areas of interests or explore breadth and become more seasoned generalists in the field.

The graduate program requires 36 hours beyond the BS, with 12 required hours of coursework, 18 hours of electives, and 6 hours of additional electives or thesis credits. Over the last three years, faculty have offered 11 different courses at least one time. Faculty indicate that they offer between 5-6 MS courses a semester, which is extensive for the size of the program faculty on top of the two delivery methods of the UG program. Data provided indicated that the courses offered have a good fill rate, with 15-22 students regularly enrolled. Many, if not most, courses are offered online or through hybrid formats. The prior program reviewer suggested exploration of offering the graduate program fully online. Discussions with faculty indicate that this remains a topic of discussion. While many/most of the substantive courses are offered online, concern remains about the pedagogical strength and skillset that would be provided to students in the skill-based courses such as research methods.

Graduate students have three options for capstone opportunities: to produce a thesis, do a comprehensive exam, or attend an internship. Of the students they reviewed with me, 18.5% completed a thesis, 27.8% did an internship, and the remainder (53.7%) were assessed through comprehensive exams.

While initially I was concerned about retention and time to graduation rates, it was noted that the majority of students in the graduate program are part-time students. As a result, these students take longer to graduate. My discussion with the faculty and Department and Program leadership indicated that program faculty have developed mechanisms to address this issue and have begun to see a decline in time to graduation.

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

The prior program reviewer indicated that the Unit had fairly significant improvements to make. I have determined that most of these concerns were addressed. Engagement in curriculum mapping process is tedious but necessary, and the unit accomplished this task, developing a more streamlined curriculum and determining what courses to highlight as required and what courses should remain electives. Their work is to be applauded.

Because the Unit has the autonomy to utilize disciplinary expertise to drive curricular decisions, the lack of overlap in planning with other departmental units may impede potential for sharing courses across programs. With increased collaboration in curriculum discussion, some of the weight of offering courses to the larger number of majors, particularly in the undergraduate degree programs, could be addressed. This would necessitate planning at the course level as well, to ensure that standards for learning outcomes are being met for each program served by an individual level course. The fact that this currently is not occurring suggests that the merger has not been fully embraced by faculty across units. However, the opportunity exists to utilize the larger department to address needs and to build cross-disciplinary programming.

Summary findings of Weaknesses/Areas of Growth

The primary weakness in this area of review is the inability regularly offer all electives. This does not mean every semester or every year, but on a schedule that students can plan out. This is not a problem for the majority of courses included in the curriculum. What is highlighted is the fact that Minorities and Crime has not been offered for at least three years. This is particularly notable given the currency of topics in this area over the past few years, stemming from Ferguson to present day; offering this course on a regular basis, and perhaps annually for a time, would help students navigate depictions of the issues students are seeing in the news using disciplinary knowledge. It is my understanding that staff shortages and the need to cover other courses and serve programmatic needs created this hole in course options. However, ensuring that faculty size and availability are flexible enough to respond to such topics would help students in their learning in present dilemmas.

When asked about course bottlenecks, faculty recognized their courts class in particular seems to hit maximum seats quickly. This is likely largely the result of transfer students bringing in introductory policing and corrections courses but needing courts. Combining the needs of transfer students with First Year Freshmen (FYF) thus likely creates this surge of students for this class. Faculty also indicated that Methods (3110) and Ethics (4300) also frequently fill, and that may different approaches have been taken to address this issue, including raising course

limits for Methods up to 90 seats and always offering methods in the summer so students can complete their degree. Typically, 4 sections of methods are offered / year (2 fall, 1 spring, 1 summer as a hybrid). Ethics also has typically high course size in order to address student demand; the Unit typically offers an 80 seat IP section and 30 seat OL section in the spring and a 30 seat section in the fall. Having enough staff to create rolling in of additional sections on a scheduled basis (such as every 3rd semester adding a 35 seat section) should mitigate the issue.

At the graduate level, the program may be overextending by offering 5-6 courses a semester. Notably, given how full courses generally are, cutting back is not necessarily an option. This setting provides another opportunity to build inter-department relationships allowing other faculty to offer graduate level courses, or offer co-taught courses that are required (such as methods) or an elective (such as a diversity-oriented course) that could be general at one level and directed to the field at another. Likewise, they could work to build partnerships with similar programs across campus (perhaps psychology) to share course offerings that would address either skillsets (methods/stats) or content (mental health) that is relevant to the discipline. More faculty also can address the issue.

3. Student Experiences

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula of undergraduate and graduate programs:

- | | | |
|---------|--|-------------------------|
| 3.1/3.2 | <i>Students have opportunity to evaluate program/faculty effectiveness</i> | <i>(Good-)</i> |
| 3.4/3.2 | <i>Diverse perspectives/experiences are included</i> | <i>(Excellent/Good)</i> |
| 3.5/3.6 | <i>Access to academic support services</i> | <i>(Good)</i> |

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for the undergraduate programs:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 3.2 | <i>Exposes students professional and career opportunities in field</i> | <i>(Fair)</i> |
| 3.3 | <i>Provides students with opportunities to apply learning outside classroom</i> | <i>(Good)</i> |

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for the graduate program:

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|
| 3.1 | <i>Ensures critical mass of students for peer learning</i> | <i>(Good-)</i> |
| 3.3 | <i>Provides professional development opportunities (conferences/workshops/etc.)</i> | <i>(Good-)</i> |
| 3.4 | <i>Provides enrichment opportunities (lecture series)</i> | <i>(Fair)</i> |

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

Students evaluate faculty courses every semester, with items on evaluations addressing instructional effectiveness. As well, students were invited to speak with the program evaluator for this review process. Unfortunately, the timing of this process under the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdowns negatively impacted students' ability to provide input. However, I do note that students did have a voice in the last program review. What is not clear is how often the programs invite students to provide comments on the curricula as a whole.

I am particularly impressed with the requirement of a diversity class (CRMJ 3310: Race, Class, Gender & Crime) within the B.S. program. This is a particularly important piece of the curriculum and the faculty are lauded for its inclusion. Moreover, the curriculum indicates that diversity/criminal justice issues are further developed through elective courses, such as Violence against Women (also offered as a CORE class); Comparative Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Systems; Minorities and Criminal Justice; Gender, Crime, and Criminal Justice; and Victimization. Also clear from syllabi review is that the issues of diversity are valued across many other courses.

In my experience, a key academic support for students is the presence of advisors informed on the field and closely affiliated with programs for which they advise. To date, it is clear that the staff advisor with whom I was able to meet is clearly dedicated to students, student progression, and student outcomes. The current advisor is closely affiliated with the program (moving into a tenure track position in the coming year) and has traditionally been housed alongside faculty geographically. It is my understanding that the College is initiating a new HUB Student Success Center, which will house faculty advisors across units. I am wholly supportive of the professional advisor model that leaves advisement of program coordination / advisement of students in the hands of a professional advisor fully informed of and connected to the additional resources needed by students, such as financial aid and other student services. My own reviews of advising models suggests that faculty driven advisement models lead to more mistakes in advisement that affect students' financial aid and progression in negative ways. The professional advisor model, as adopted this College and by this Unit, allows faculty to mentor students into careers and provide disciplinary guidance, while at the same time providing students with advisors whose focus is on tracking student needs and curricular changes, with consideration of other, more global needs. The College and Unit commitments to maintaining a professional advisor for students is commended.

Summary findings of Weaknesses/Areas of Growth

It is important to build in more flexibility in the schedule to allow offering of topics that may be timely for current issues. At this time, seeking or flexing the schedule to ensure that Minorities and Criminal Justice is offered would be appropriate.

Conversations identified a missed opportunity – fostering student life at the student level. Ultimately, enhances student learning outcomes by building educational bridges across peers and their experiences, but also enhances career outcomes by helping students build their network connections for use later in their careers. Moreover, fostering these connections with students ultimately will enhance program outcomes, as alumni with strong programmatic connections will reach back to assist the Unit and may be in positions in the field in their careers that can lead to unique and enhanced research opportunities.

An additional missed opportunity for students is found in the low number who opt into the internship experience. Faculty relayed that only 8-10% of students take advantage of this program. The program is under new leadership and the Unit clearly is already addressing the issue, as they are preparing to supervise 25 students over the summer and anticipating 20-22 students to enroll in fall internships. The good news in this is that the low number of students in this program reduced the number of students who would have been out of these credits this summer or in the fall with the impact of COVID on agencies taking interns. In the long run, it is recommended that the Unit continue its investment in the program, giving the coordinator the

time needed to build relationships with regional agencies to build up these resources for students. Provision of such experiential learning opportunities augments student learning outcomes and is key in helping students obtain that first position out of college. While the front end costs – specifically in time out of the classroom – are high, the rewards for students, and ultimately the program, in the long run are immeasurable.

4. Faculty

The following criteria were utilized to examine Unit faculty for both undergraduate and graduate programs:

4.1.	<i>Meet credentialing standards</i>	<i>(Excellent/Good+)</i>
4.3.1	<i>Cultivates diversity (gender, ethnicity, academic background)</i>	<i>(Good/Good+)</i>
4.4/4.6	<i>Incorporates faculty evaluation system to improve teaching, scholarship, and service</i>	<i>(Good/Excellent)</i>
4.4	<i>Engage in regular professional development</i>	<i>(Good/Excellent)</i>
4.5	<i>Engage in planning for student success</i>	<i>(Good)</i>
4.4/4.2	<i>Adequate number of faculty to meet needs with appropriate teaching loads</i>	<i>(Good)/</i>
	<i>Loads are aligned with individualized nature of graduate instruction</i>	<i>Fair)</i>

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

Review of faculty vitas indicates that faculty easily meet credentialing standards for both programs, with all current faculty holding terminal degrees and ably contributing to student learning within the undergraduate and graduate programs. Scholarly productivity naturally feeds graduate student development, and more tenure-track faculty invested in mentoring graduate students and provided with the time to do so will further enhance graduate programming. Program faculty are diverse; seven of the nine full time faculty are female while two represent minority statuses. Importantly, faculty are committed to diversity throughout their curriculum.

Faculty development is clearly a commitment for the institution. I was impressed that new faculty complete a year-long course in their first year, meeting weekly, to engage in learning about teaching and learning. This commitment to professional development and provision of resources to new faculty serves to increase understanding of students' needs and provides faculty with tools and skills they may not have developed as they learned the content of their disciplines.

The Department Head and associate head, as well as the Dean, proudly identified three faculty identified as UC Professorship (Karen, Christina, and Courtney). This indicates that faculty expertise in the Unit is recognized and rewarded across campus, an impressive accomplishment.

The commitment in the Unit to further fostering professional development through travel to conferences for scholarly presentations and to keep abreast of the field also is commended. Notably, the Unit has seen an increase in faculty travel to conferences for professional development from 2016-2019, not only in terms of number of faculty traveling – which doubled between 2016 and 2017, but also in the availability of funds for faculty to make multiple trips (see table below).

Faculty Travel

	1 trip	2 trips	3 trips	Total
2016: # of faculty	1	2	--	5
2017: # of faculty	5	1	1	10
2018: # of faculty	3	2	1	10
2019: # of faculty	2	5	--	12

Some faculty travel more regularly and to more meetings (Policastro, Crittenden, Garland) than do other faculty; the travel of these faculty members in particular appears to match their professional development and professional service obligations to national and regional associations. I find it laudable that the College provides up to \$1000 in a travel award. The College also provides up to \$1,500 for research projects/travel through faculty grants, which, it was noted, are very competitive. The system allows for Prep Grants and Faculty Sabbaticals, and Unit faculty have been recipients of each. Continuing to invest in such programs will set faculty up for continued success.

The EDO strategy utilized by the University requires that faculty set their own objectives, reflecting department, college and university missions, as well as personal and professional development. Setting objectives and paths to their achievement requires faculty to think ahead about their goals. The process also allows a faculty member to account for their time within the EDO document.

Unit members work well as a group. They are collaborative and as a result innovative in meeting the needs of the students, program, and each other. While this period has been tumultuous, the faculty have a “get it done” attitude, which has driven their success.

Faculty were asked about the culture of student life at the departmental level. Each noted that more bonding appears to occur among the graduate cohorts than among undergraduate students. However, it was noted that an emergent theme is the mentoring of undergraduate students by graduate students. Faculty noted that the presence of a co-mingled space would greatly assist faculty in their desire to encourage interactions with and between students. Faculty expressed hesitancy in the past for encouraging more informal interactions with students because of since-resolved personnel issues. At this point they are seeing improvement in the student culture and climate among their major populations.

Summary findings of Weaknesses/Areas of Growth

Diversity. To begin, I restate that the diversity present in the Unit is impressive. However, I do note that the Department Bylaws do not provide guidance or directives regarding diversity or mechanisms to enhance diversity. Pedagogical data, particularly in the field of criminal justice,

suggest that ensuring that faculty in the field appropriately reflect our student populations increase positive student outcomes. Moreover, the current social context suggest that the need for students in our field to be ready and able to address citizens and communities across a various social dimensions (race, ethnicity, class, sex, gender/identity, age, etc.) is significant. It is recommended that consideration of this need is regularly addressed when considering programmatic needs in future hires. Again, I want to reiterate that this is NOT a weakness in the current approach, but rather I am encouraging the Department to develop written policies/recommended strategies to ensure their approach continues.

Unit faculty size/course loads.

The key concern in this area is the drop in staffing from 2017, with 12 full time faculty members, to 9 full time faculty at the time of the current review. If the program were just being provided at the undergraduate level and through in-person course delivery, this drop would be problematic in workload shifts, but it would be manageable. That this Unit provides programs and courses in a myriad of settings led to multiple issues. To begin, it is noted that the program provides two courses in the CORE. This is important not only by serving the larger student community (it is noted that these sections always fill – not unsurprising in the field), but also as these courses serve to recruit new students into the major. Undergraduate courses not only serve the major, but also the minor, and the program is conducted as a 2+2 completion program online. Acceptable practices in online programs require capping online courses at a manageable size (with QM recommendations at 25 students) in order for faculty to be able to adequately engage with students in these courses as necessary for student success. Scheduling thus must be done carefully, with clear course rotations and very little room for variation. This is further complicated with the presence of the graduate program, which has its own program requirements and calls for significant individualized instruction. With the loss of faculty across this time frame (during different years, losing different specialties in the curriculum), extant faculty were required to “pick up the slack” and/or shift into new/different courses to ensure that students could appropriately proceed in the major.

This is further complicated by the larger and Departmental context. During this time period the faculty in this Unit were teaching a 4-4 load, while tenure track faculty across the college and faculty in other units within their Department were able to shift to a 3/3 teaching load. While the intent was to shift all faculty to this load, it simply was not possible in the last year for this to be accomplished in this Unit as a result of the courses/sections that needed to be offered across the different degree programs for students to progress. This outcome clearly depicts the conundrum for this Unit. Indeed, even maintaining this higher teaching load across all faculty, the need for course coverage by adjunct instructors increased. In 2017, adjuncts produced approximately 21% of the SCHs for this Unit, while in 2019, adjuncts generated 30% and 24% of SCH for the unit in the spring and fall semesters, respectively. Also notable is that the Unit increased its overall SCH, from 4776 SCH in spring 2017 to 5816 in fall 2019 (a gain of 1,040 SCH).

Faculty are stretched thin and have low morale. (For example, one faculty member taught 6 courses in one semester last year.) That this is recognized by leadership at the College and University levels is positive, with their recognition that this merger has been problematic.

Discussions with leadership yielded identification of diverse ideas about addressing faculty morale, as well as notations that workload issues have begun to be addressed. Specifically, the addition of two additional tenure track faculty in fall 2020 will raise the number of full-time faculty in the unit back to 11. An additional line for a visiting professor (full time temporary faculty) is also under consideration, with COVID-19 leading to freezes and additional considerations for resources. Hiring this additional line would bring them back to the full level of staffing present at their prior review.

The key recommendation is to address staffing needs. This should commence with Unit discussions of what is needed for them to be able to offer courses allowing students to appropriately progress in all programs (UG: IP/OL and G), serving the institution through appropriately set CORE offerings, and within teaching loads set at 3/3 for tenure track and 4/4 for non-tenure track faculty. Within these considerations, it is likely that it will be determined that adding at least one additional tenure track line would improve offerings at the graduate level, enabling strategic growth in this program and adding a second faculty line (either tenure track or lecturer) would reduce course sizes to come closer to QM recommendations for online courses, and enhancing offerings in the CORE, if not the graduate program.

5. Learning Resources

The following criteria were utilized to examine the learning resources for undergraduate and graduate programs:

- 5.1 *Evaluates equipment/etc. regularly (n.a.)*
- 5.2 *Access to learning and information resources for teaching development/support (Good/Good)*

The following criteria were utilized to examine the learning resources for the graduate program:

- 5.1 *Provides adequate support staff/materials for research/publication (Good)*

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

IT services are centralized and it appears that computer refreshes occur on regular cycle (<https://new.utc.edu/information-technology/services/computer-refresh-program>). Faculty did note that their laptops are generally not research compatible, lacking space/RAM to run data analyses on larger data sets that are not uncommon in the field. As COVID-19 continues to impact faculty time on campus, this is something that should be considered when purchases for new faculty are made and as computers are refreshed. Ensuring that the Unit/Department Heads know the needs of faculty for research prior to refreshes would be useful if possible.

The resources available for faculty and students appear to be sufficient. Faculty indicated that they have access to key statistical software and that specialty software licenses have been purchased when needed. Evaluating use of software across units within the college (such as with political science and psychology) may yield findings that reductions in costs could occur if needs were pooled across units and more licenses were purchased together for lower costs / license.

I am impressed by the library holdings for the program. Specifically, I learned that the library holds databases for CJ Abstracts Full Text and the SAGE Criminology Index, which together capture the bulk of journals common in the field. That these two resources are available to students and faculty should be lauded, as many institutions rely on one or the other resource.

Such access allows faculty to keep current with research trends and findings and allows them to provide students with access to the research that produces evidence-based policies. Moreover, it is laudable that the Unit has created a close relationship with the library, not only making use of material resources, but also utilizing library assistance in the educational setting, including librarians in presentations to students in the Research Methods classes, relying on their assistance in identifying affordable course material, and serving as research liaisons for research projects for and with students.

Summary findings of Weaknesses/Areas of Growth

Faculty seek better access to common space/conferencing area where they can work with students near faculty offices on individual projects (honor's students, individual research, etc.),

Faculty indicated in my discussion with them that at one point they had access to a computer lab that they used with students; they noted that there have been requests for recreation of a lab for their students to use (both UG and G) when working on research projects. In particular, they note that they are housed in a building that is somewhat further from the heart of campus where other labs are located, and having one more centralized for their student population, that is close to the faculty with whom they are working, would enhance interactions. In a best case scenario, finding a space that could co-locate common area with lab area would be quite useful for the programs offered by the Unit. If space exists in their current location to provide one or both of these, it would be useful. It was also noted that SAG has access to such space in their building.

Conversations about space indicated that if CJ faculty were to move to the building housing the other units of SAG, they also would have access to share this space. If done, it should be noted that this will be like a newly married couple where one spouse moves into the other's already furnished home. It will be imperative that leadership make efforts to not wedge time in for the CJ students and faculty into current holdings, but rather that new schedules and locations arise with input from all sides, and that discussions not be based on prior uses by current tenants, but rather needs of all.

It was noted that the UT-C is not a member of ICPSR. Across the institution it would be useful to determine if interest in membership would be cost effective to consider. Membership offers not only access to data, but reduced costs for professional development in analytic strategies and data available. Deferring attendance to conferences for faculty to instead have them attend ICPSR can be a strategic method for assisting faculty in making new professional connections and shifts in research agendas. Importantly, access to data would also allow faculty greater access to relevant instructional materials for courses and for individualized learning experiences (undergraduate research and theses, etc.).

6. Support

The following criteria were utilized to examine support for both undergraduate and graduate programs:

- 5.1 Operating budget meets needs of program/s (Good)
- 6.2 Enrollment/graduation rates sustain high quality, cost-effective programs (Excellent/Good-)
- 6.3 Responds to local, state, regional and national needs (Good)

The following criteria were utilized to examine the curricula for the graduate program:

- 6.4 Collects data on graduates and evaluates placement (Good)
- 6.5 Reviews procedures regularly to ensure alignment with Inst. policies, etc. (Good)

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

Budget data provided did not clearly delineate fund sources for Unit faculty separate from other Department funds (from what I could ascertain). However, reviewing faculty travel, etc., indicates that aside from the need for additional faculty, funding appears to provide good support for the unit, particularly through the online incentive funds remanded to the Unit for their production of this income. It appears, at least at this point, that these funds are being returned to the Unit in which they are produced. Some questions were raised, however, about the transparency of the SAG budget – in terms of inputs and outflows to different units. It was intimated that faculty in this Unit were initially told that their budget would remain intact and separate, but that this has not occurred. This lack of transparency adds to the distrust within the Unit of the larger Department.

Currently the Unit is making good use of these funds to support their graduate program and support faculty in research. Tracking and identifying how these funds are used and the outcomes associated with them would be useful in case the funds are ever reduced. Being able to demonstrate that these funds supported needs and directly improved student outcomes will assist as budgets evolve.

Summary of Strengths and Opportunities

The ability of operating budget to meet the needs of the program/s is unclear. The reports for both UG and G programs indicate that the budget is sufficient, but discussions also indicate that these programs rely on online tuition funds for student and faculty travel and faculty professional development. The budget information received appears to be for the Department as a whole, so it was difficult to ascertain use of funding to support the specific needs of these programs. If the operating budget met the needs of the program, then arguably the online funds could be used for other things. However, at this point, they appear to have what they need.

Enrollment rates are steady, with slight decreases across both program levels during the 5 year period, common across students nationally. However, their trends, statistically, are more realistically interpreted as steady, impressive given the fluctuations in faculty size.

I do again want to compliment the faculty for their willingness to double-down and dedicate themselves to their students in spite of hardships. I also want to note that this is recognized outside of the department by administrators.

Summary findings of Weaknesses/Areas of Growth

Like many programs, it appears that little consistent data is collected for graduates at either program level. At many institutions when this data is collected, it is done at the institutional level. Seeking ways to track graduates would be a worthwhile endeavor. Tracking data will inform the Unit whether the program is yielding employment and further educational opportunities for students in the field. Information gathered, with permission, could be utilized for advertising and advancing the programs, particularly at the graduate level. More information was presented on known outcomes for graduates of the MS program. Enhancing tracking of student outcomes post-graduation will help the faculty further address curriculum strengths and needs.

A key strength raised was that faculty in the Unit have been approached to do research in the field for local agencies and to partner with agencies to apply for grants. While a clear strength, I am including it as an area poised for growth as faculty further noted that more frequently than not they do **not** follow through with these requests as they feel that they do not have the time (due to teaching loads and service obligations) or the support to commit to such projects. Growing the faculty size so that they have the time to follow through on these connections and make connections of their own ultimately not only help faculty with their own careers. More importantly, it provides avenues for faculty to provide students with enhanced access to these same agencies for career and research skill development. As well, such collaborations ultimately tie the Institution together with the community in positive ways for each and the constituents they serve.

The Criminal Justice BS and MS degree programs demonstrate steady enrollment despite the fluctuations in the numbers of available faculty and the turnover in the unit. With additional resources, the unit could work to grow each of these programs, but this will require additional support, both financial (in terms of lines), and organizational. That faculty must meet the different needs of the varied programs is underscored, as faculty are stretched thin meeting the needs of their current student populations.

Clear processes and procedures do not exist for allocation of graduate students to the program and within the Unit. CJ has typically had 3 students funded on allocated graduate student assistantships. When a separate department, the faculty indicate that they had clarity and direction in utilizing Online funds to support their graduate program, providing additional graduate student assistantships to assist with both research projects and teaching, enhancing their own professional growth. No documentation was provided that clearly indicated how online funds were utilized to support the Unit and its graduate programs and to enhance its undergraduate programming. Some questions appear to exist among the faculty on how such funding has been funneled within the Department over the past five years.

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Add full-time faculty lines.

Given the current structure of programs and required course offerings needed to ensure student progression and success, the Department needs access to funding to add at least two and preferably three additional faculty members. This ideally would be accomplished by adding one tenure track line in the coming year, specifically one that will help faculty address the need to continue to offer diversity courses in the major, and which would also assist the department in continuing to meet the visions of the College and University (along with their own). Additional lines would be added one a year for the next two years. These lines would ideally include a lecturer or Non-tenure track line that could assist with continuing to grow experiential learning for undergraduate programming, and an additional tenure-track line that would allow growth in the graduate program.

These additional lines would allow the Unit to meet current course needs while simultaneously reducing full-time faculty teaching loads to levels meeting those of their peers, without significant constraints if faculty receive leave/sabbatical or leave the institution. The addition of two additional tenure track lines in the coming fall adds the equivalent of six sections, leaving two TT faculty on a 4-4 load. An additional tenure track line would eliminate this, and would give the freedom of course releases for program directors or course coverage if faculty receive grants or contracts. The additional lecturer line would allow for a lowering of reliance on adjunct/part-time faculty. Finally, the addition of a third tenure track line would allow for program growth, particularly at the graduate level.

2. Stabilize the context and footprint of the Unit.

- a. This could involve discussions about the impact of the merger on this unit and should include a discussion of what goals were to be accomplished by the merger of this unit with others in the larger Department and whether these goals were met and the programs and faculty in this Unit have been well-served within the current context. The entry of a new Dean makes consideration of this question timely. Input from Unit members as well as the Department Head and other involved parties should be considered in conversations with upper levels of administration.
- b. If it is determined that the combined Department should remain intact, then reducing or eliminating future physical moves, ensuring that space moved to is comparable or better than space they are being asked to vacate, and ensuring transparency and faculty input into their Unit destiny is essential. Providing access to delineated student community space (meeting rooms and/or small computer labs) should be a consideration.
- c. Discussions and decisions should occur as soon as possible, as faculty and staff are already experiencing stress concerning the loss of their physical space.
- d. As soon as possible (prior to the start of the next semester), if a move occurs, the location of the Unit should be advertised and made available to students and visitors to campus, through initiation of physical and digitally available signage so faculty can be easily found.

3. Hiring informed Department Chair.

Carefully consider candidates for Department Chair to ensure that the Unit's value is recognized and it will be treated equally and equitably within the larger Unit. Candidates should recognize that approximately 70-80% of the SAG majors are housed in programs within this Unit.

4. Strategically promote the Unit and its programs.

- a. Ensure promotion of the successes of the Unit's faculty and students within the Institution. This can enhance collaborations between faculty in different, compatible units, as well as for student opportunities.
- b. Promote activities of the Unit's faculty and student successes within the larger community and region.
 - i. Examples of activities that can enhance outreach and serve
- c. The College and Unit should begin work as soon as possible to develop a campaign that highlights the Unit's mission, activities and successes. Promotional campaigns should be developed to inform the University community as well as the regional community. Rolling out these campaigns in the next year, and monitoring progress over the next five years to see impact would be useful in maintaining programs, as well as targeting growth areas.
 - i. Ideas may include bringing alumni to campus in a speaker series, creating an alumni "mentoring" series for students,

5. Engage in strategic planning for the Unit.

Ideally, a new Department Chair would be starting in the fall, with the initial initiative of drafting a new strategic plan. Nonetheless, completion of these program reviews provides a ripe time for this Unit to engage in some form of strategic planning, at a minimum identifying goals for the next five years. Ideally this would occur across the next year. Specific recommendations include:

- a. Discuss viability and desire to have an online program, with a focus on resource allocation needed to appropriately fund the program.
- b. Determine how to strategically grow the online B.S. program, particularly in the current context.

6. Continue to support faculty research and extramural grant activity.

It might be useful to provide support through releases to faculty who have "stepped up" to teach overloads and taken on greater service loads during this period with decreased faculty to allow them to recalibrate their research activities. This should be considered outside of normal leave processes (this recommendation is made understanding that budgets may preclude this approach). Providing additional allocated GA lines to the Unit would be appropriate for supporting and rewarding the research productivity of the unit, and at the same time would yield benefits to students.

7. Engage in strategic collaborations with other Units in the Department (and other departments on campus) to develop cross-listed courses, co-teaching strategies, etc., to expand curricular offerings available to students while maintaining academic rigor.

Additional targeted recommendations are offered within the body of the report. These key recommendations, however, address more overarching issues.

Addressing Faculty Morale

I want to take a moment to speak about the faculty morale of this Unit. I note that the members of the administration with whom I spoke have many praises for the faculty and all that they have and continue to accomplish. All noted that this Unit has experienced a tumultuous period during this review span. That morale is an issue is not a surprise. Below I provide key recommendations targeted at the themes that emerged during my visit.

Ensuring faculty are included in discussions of needs and wants at multiple levels is an area for growth. Part of the morale issue is connected to their feeling that they have been “recipients” of decisions rather than “participants” in decisions. In other words, they feel that they have been told that decisions have been made with their best interests in mind, without actually communicating with them about their interests. While in most bureaucratic circumstances, relying on communications between upper administration and the chair would suffice; however, because of the merger the desires of the faculty of this Unit may not always have been adequately communicated upward by the Department Chair (I am not talking about the current leadership of the Department).

At the time of this review, the most frequently referenced example concerned space. Within the context of the Department, moves have previously impacted only this Unit and they are facing another move while their colleagues remain in stable spaces. Faculty seem to have adapted to their space, even purchasing furniture tailored to fit their individual spaces, but are now hearing that they will be making. Others in their unit have not experienced similar disruptions in their space and to their time (preparing to move, unpacking from move, reorganizing). They appreciated that while they had to move once, it was into an improved space. They anticipate that the forthcoming move will be into smaller offices with no additional space available in the building set aside for collaborative space for their Unit (they would be sharing the larger Departmental spaces instead) and they would be last in line for access to already jointly shared space. They do not feel that they have a voice in the decision-making and that they and their work is not respected as they are the Unit in the larger department that continues to suffer disruptions. Furthermore, while in the long run the new space may enhance their contacts/interactions with students, they noted that once again the students in their programs will be at a loss to locate them (they indicated that location information on campus was never updated so that students could find their location). They also are under the impression that they will move out of newly remodeled space into space that is merely being vacated and with smaller offices; so their impression is that they are now being downgraded. While this is not the goal, a conversation with the Unit’s faculty to hear and address their concerns would be useful.

Departmental leadership should ensure transparency in decision-making, and decisions should be based on extant rather than projected needs. Communication within the Department should engage this Unit as an equal player at the table in the development of policies and decisions. The faculty noted that ultimately the only thing that was really merged was the budgets of the different programs, and they have seen no advantage emerge for their Unit as a result of the merger, as they have continued to maintain their programs with increased workloads (generating more SCH with fewer faculty) that are higher than those in other programs. While it is clear that this occurred in part because of staff departures, administrative reviews decision-making (beyond the information that I have) can determine whether hires were made in other units in the Department that were as essential as the needs demonstrated by the higher teaching loads in this program. The faculty also perceive that they were supposed to emerge from the merger with an additional allocated graduate assistant line (raising them to 4), but their current allocation sits at 3. This was provided as additional evidence that consideration of their needs was not at the heart of the merger, but rather the needs of the other units.

As already noted, the myriad of programs served by a relatively small faculty has yielded higher workloads for faculty, both in terms of the number of students they are serving and the mechanisms that they are serving them through. The low staff/student/program ratio has had significant impacts on faculty. This faculty remained on a 4-4 load longer than their Departmental and College peers because they simply could not offer the courses needed for students to progress without continuing on the higher load. Not only was their load higher, but faculty were unable to consistently “double” up courses. In other words, while some faculty were granted “double sections” (teaching 80 students at one time rather than two sections of 40), they were still teaching more students than their peers. Moreover, while some faculty were given double courses, allowing them to teach three different substantive topics, those teaching 4 courses in one semester were frequently teaching 4 different course preparations. On top of this, these faculty also contributing significantly to student research productivity and individualized projects with both graduate and undergraduate students. Current leadership is working to address these issues, and it has had a clear positive impact based on faculty comments. However, that the Unit reached this point demonstrates the need to ensure that future Departmental leadership must fully understand the needs and complexities of this Unit.

Finally, the third major concern of the faculty impacting morale is the search for a Departmental Chair. It appears that the position for of Chair for the Department was held from the Criminal Justice program, and hence is the final line that this unit is down from prior to the merger. It is unclear from my review as I did not have access to information from other units in the Department; but if true, this Unit will indeed “lose” this line if the chair hired in from another programmatic area in the Department. The failed search this year concerns the faculty and they are not holding out hope that the chair will be hired from their field. I do note here that the current leadership was commended for the fairness and equity that they have experienced over the past year. Having an Interim Chair from outside the combined units provided fresh and unfettered views of policies, procedures and decision-making, which ultimately yielded a more content faculty than I presume I would have met a year ago. I have the utmost respect for the job done by Dr. Purkey as interim Chair, as coming from the outside to a Department with different

Unity personalities, visions, and goals and pulling them together to become more cohesive is not an easy task. Dr. Purkey was always upbeat in our conversations about the gains made and steps in progress to address faculty concerns. The goal for the administration in hiring a permanent chair will be to ensure that if the individual comes from outside of this discipline there is understanding of the significant contributions to the Department that come from this Unit, which has a multitude of program complexities.

Concluding Remarks

My overall conclusion of the programs offered by the Unit is that they are excellent, well-managed, and directed by a committed, competent and talented faculty. Processes of curriculum development, course delivery, and assessment are in line with professional standards of the discipline and reflect current best practices. There is clear engagement in the assessment, review, reflect, and address process for both course and curricular development by a faculty that is committed to producing strong student outcomes.

I am impressed with the Institutional commitment to helping new faculty hone their pedagogical skills. I am also particularly pleased with the movement of the College to professional advising models, which research indicates provide the best outcomes for students. I am further impressed with the resources provided by the Library in support of this Unit, and commend the faculty for building close ties with the Library.

In sum, the largest hurdle facing the Unit is growing its identity coming out of the decision previously made and that will follow this review. The issues of morale that exist are holdovers from the merger into a combined Unit, and decisions should be made that will speed the recovery of this Unit so that it begin to flourish rather than maintain. I do note that decisions have already been made to add back faculty lines. These additions, however, should be viewed as bringing the Unit into a functional position. Without additional lines beyond these, growth potential is significantly limited as faculty will still be short a line and will still be working within complex parameters for course delivery. I also suspect that the current COVID-19 pandemic will further complicate course delivery structures, adding to the very real scheduling burdens faced by this Unit.

Overall, I ask that the recommendations presented in this report be viewed more as opportunities and ideas for improvement and less as a reflection of weaknesses, for that is the intent with which they are offered.