

DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY RESPONSE TO:
The Undergraduate Program Review Evaluation Team Report
(WSU Department of Criminal Justice)

April 12, 2017

On February 17, 2017, a program review evaluation team visited the Criminal Justice Department at Weber State University. The team consisted of Dr. Lish Harris (head of the Criminal Justice Program at Dixie State University) and Dr. Branden Little (associate professor of History at Weber State University). The purpose of the visit was to assess the criminal justic

The second "challenge" identified was "Adjunct Supervision." Various faculty members expressed concerns regarding insufficient evaluation and monitoring of adjunct professors. We agree with the need for improvement and have formulated a plan (see below).

The last "challenge" concerned our potentially adopting a completely online degree (to be added to our face-to-face program) in response to encouragement from Continuing Education. This challenge has already been addressed since the team's visit and is discussed under "recommendations for change," found below.

In addition to the above-noted "challenges," the visiting team also identified three "weaknesses."

The first identified weakness was our lack of a healthy number of written and oral communication assignments within our program. Like advisement, this proves challenging given the number of our students. Nevertheless, we agree that this is a worthy goal for us to pursue. Our "Action Plan" is addressed below under "Recommendations for Change."

The second "weakness" involved our forensic science degree (i.e. lack of students pursuing the "lab scientist" option within our two-prong forensic program coupled with the lack of openings within the field). We agree that this is a real concern and will discuss our plan in the next section.

The third weakness concerned our CJ Senior Capstone Course and the lack of breadth and rigor within it that is typical of courses entitled, "senior capstone." As the visiting team learned, this course is currently being used as a delivery system for a standardized test, the results of which are used for student assessment (i.e. what a student has learned in the CJ program). Our department is always committed to improving the way we do assessment, and as will be noted below (under "Recommendations") we are making efforts to rethink both our capstone course and some aspects of our assessment efforts.

This brings us to the last (and perhaps most important) part of the visiting team report: "Recommendations for Change." Six such recommendations were made and we will state

adopt Psychology Department's model. We will be voting on this matter very soon as a department. Should the faculty vote "no," or should no suitable faculty member be willing to be our department advisor, then we will explore rotating advisement with a course buy-out like the visiting team specifically envisioned.

The second recommendation calls for us to "study the likely implications of an Online Bachelor's Degree." Continuing Education has encouraged us to consider doing this, and there is concern among some of us regarding future competition for students from UVU which is planning to launch its own online degree soon. Subsequent to the visit of the review team in February, Drs. Horn and Bayley of our department were tasked with investigating the pros and cons of our creating such an online degree (to be added to our face-to-face degree). They did a fine job in creating a highly detailed, lengthy and nuanced analysis and presented their findings to department members in a faculty meeting. The faculty then voted and decided not to pursue the creation of an online B.S. degree at this time. Too many of us lacked enthusiasm for such a method of delivery; and there were concerns that the thread-bare majority who favored the idea did not constitute sufficient consensus for the entire department to start down this ambitious path.

The third recommendation was for us to "create a schedule of adjunct evaluation." Given our rather substantial reliance on adjunct faculty (especially at night in Ogden but also some during the day in Ogden and also in our programs at the Davis and SLCC campuses), we agree that a plan in this area is needed. It is our intention this fall to form a department-level committee, which will be tasked to come up with a better system of more regularly, and thoroughly, evaluating the teaching effectiveness of our adjunct faculty, including, if possible, wide participation from the entire tenure and tenure-track faculty (to lighten the load).

The fourth recommendation is to create a "writing intensive and oral communication designation." Given the huge number of students we teach, professors can understandably be reluctant to require many writing intensive or oral intensive assignments in their (often) large-enrollment courses. That said, communication skills are very important. We shall make this an important item of discussion during one of our early department faculty meetings in the fall of the coming academic year. We shall determine the exact extent that professors in our core courses already have such assignments and the degree to which such assignments could be expanded, if necessary. The recommendation from the team was for two core courses to be designated: one as "writing intensive" and the other "oral communication intensive." We will discuss the feasibility of officially designating a particular core course as "writing intensive" and another as "oral communication intensive," including the possibility of rotating such

the Director of our forensics program, has expressed his desire to eliminate the forensic lab science (analyst) component for some time, given the lack of students selecting to major in Lab Science (as opposed to our CSI program) and the paucity of employment opportunities for forensic lab scientists. Dr. Horn will soon come up with a plan to start the process of ending the lab science degree, in consultation with the Dean, and assuming the Dean gives his approval. Current students already in the program will need to be given a path to finish what they started.

The sixth and last recommendation is to "recalibrate CJ 4995, Senior Capstone Course." We have already begun the process of re-thinking and re-inventing this course, including the