# Program Assessment Components and Process

**Degree Name:** Master of Science in Criminal Justice  
**Academic Year:** 2006  
**Completer of Form:** Barry R. Langford

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| Direct:  
Culminating paper/research project and presentation of findings.  
[st. test]  
[portfolio]  
[case study]  
[dept. exam]  
[etc.] | Full time Departmental faculty  
in consultation/cooperation with the EVP/DAA  
and CAP and Graduate Council | Departmental faculty meetings  
Curricular advisory Board meetings  
Program Reviews  
Faculty Integration conferences  
Chair review of faculty evaluations, communications from key informants, and survey results | During 2006 the primary focus of our Department was the Program review and a faculty integration conference. As a result, no major changes were implemented during 2006. As the attached documentation indicates, the program review team suggested several changes for the MSCJ program. The Department will be implementing certain recommendations of the Program Review during 2007-8. Please see the attached documentation. |
| Indirect:  
Program Assessment Instrument, a survey given to students in MSCJ 580.  
Curricular advisory Board  
Informal Alumni surveys  
Review of student evaluations of faculty for comments on the curriculum  
Program Reviews every five years  
Communications from key informants, including current students, public sector managers, and alumni.  
[etc.] | Full-time faculty  
Academic Assessment Committee  
EVP/DAA  
VP/AHE  
[etc.] | Regular faculty meetings  
Academic Assessment Committee meetings  
FICs  
[etc.] | [specific changes in curriculum]  
[specific changes in pedagogy]  
[personnel changes]  
[creation of advising groups]  
[creation of new student orientation]  
[specific change in program adm. standards]  
[creation/revision of student handbook]  
[etc.] |
The Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) is designed primarily for practitioners in the field of criminal justice interested in developing and/or enhancing administrative skills. The program is also designed to meet the analytical and theoretical needs of students who will continue with doctoral or law studies. The degree emphasizes four foundational areas: trends in criminal justice, policy development and analysis, research design, and ethics in criminal justice. Understanding derived from these courses provides graduate students a solid foundation for dealing with the many critical issues confronting the contemporary criminal justice administrator. Courses are structured in a hands-on format encouraging maximum student interaction while at the same time encouraging the development of useful action skills.

In addition, the Department has developed the following Program learning goals for graduates of the MSCJ program:

1. To acquire increased skills in writing in a criminal justice context.
2. To acquire increased and improved skills in public speaking.
3. To enhance managerial decision making, communication, and organizational skills.
4. To obtain real-world critical thinking/problem solving skills as they relate to criminal justice and public policy.
5. To gain knowledge about recent developments and trends in criminal justice.
6. To learn how to apply experience and research to the development of public policy and acceptable criminal procedure.
7. To gain knowledge of comparative criminal justice policy and procedures and possible applications in an American criminal justice setting.

**SOURCES OF EVALUATIVE INFORMATION**

The Department's Capstone Course, MSCJ 580, is the primary site for gathering of Assessment information. This course was taught during the fall of 2006. As a culminating experience course, it requires students to refine their writing skills through submission of numerous critical thinking based writing assignments and student presentation of findings regarding same. During this course the Department administered a Program Assessment Instrument, which requested the students to submit answers to 10 questions designed to assess the quality of the MSCJ program.
Additionally, all of the Departmental courses were taught in 2006. All of these courses conducted individualized assessment activities designed to measure the Program’s achievement of its objectives. These Assessment activities referenced by the Program learning goal furthered are listed below.

(1) To acquire increased skills in writing in a criminal justice context.

Assessment: Writing is stressed throughout the MSCJ curriculum. MSCJ 500 and MSCJ 580 have writing as the primary focus. All remaining MSCJ courses require writing and submission of research papers, case studies, and essay examinations.

(2) To acquire increased and improved skills in public speaking.

Assessment: Public speaking is stressed throughout the MSCJ curriculum. All MSCJ courses require the student to deliver at least one individual oral presentation during the eight week session. Many departmental courses require two or more presentations. Additionally, the class discussion among working professionals, which is inherent in all Graduate courses, helps to further the above skills.

(3) To enhance managerial decision making, communication, and organizational skills.

Assessment: Students are required to take MSCJ 532- Organizational Behavior and MSCJ 526- Human Resource Management and Theory. Both of these courses deal exclusively with the above issues. All remaining courses enhance communication skills through requiring oral and written work, and the demands of Graduate school enhance organizational skills.

(4) To obtain real-world critical thinking/problem solving skills as they relate to criminal justice and public policy.

Assessment: MSCJ 501- Current Issues and Future Directions in Criminal Justice and MSCJ 524- Criminal Justice Policy Development and Evaluation, are required foundational courses. Both of these courses involve the critical evaluation and analysis of current and future criminal justice policies. The remaining curriculum promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills through reading, writing and speaking requirements on pertinent topics.
(5) To gain knowledge about recent developments and trends in criminal justice.

Assessment: MSCJ 501 focuses exclusively on recent developments and trends in Criminal Justice. All remaining MSCJ courses are designed to examine recent developments and trends in the particular content area, and all students are encouraged to present the most current information in their chosen field.

(6) To learn how to apply experience and research to the development of public policy and acceptable criminal procedure.

Assessment: MSCJ 524 requires students to analyze policy proposals and to distinguish between policy and procedure. Remaining MSCJ courses consider current policy issues on an as needed basis.

(7) To gain knowledge of comparative criminal justice policy and procedures and possible applications in an American criminal justice setting.

Assessment: MSCJ 525- Comparative Criminal Justice Systems-focuses exclusively on Comparative World Criminal Justice Systems. Many topics in this course involve an overt or subtle comparison of other World Justice systems with the American system.

During 2006, all CJAD and MSCJ programs were evaluated during the program review conducted each 5 years. The Review team issued several recommendations pertinent to the MSCJ, which are set forth below followed by the Department response

(7) MSCJ curriculum changes-Relevant language (the team’s suggestion) is as follows:

1) Elimination of MSCJ 501 or creation of a clearly stated objective for MSCJ 501 Current Issues and Future Directions in Criminal Justice.

2) MSCJ 533 and MSCJ 550 appear redundant and the program may benefit from the elimination of one of the courses.
3) MSCJ 561 Crisis Intervention would make a good elective offering rather than a core requirement.

4) MSCJ 580 Capstone/Intensive Writing Seminar may be eliminated as the expectation at the graduate level is that all courses are writing intensive. Elimination of the course allows for the opportunity to replace it with an elective offering.

5) Since this program is pragmatically focused, an elective course in the specific area of budgeting and planning is recommended.

6) For assessment purposes it is also recommended that a comprehensive exam for no credit be required of each student. There are a multitude of comprehensive exam methods and this will need to be examined to determine the type of exam best suited for the Columbia College MSCJ program.

Departmental response-We acknowledge that certain curricular changes are necessary. We are going to survey the curricula of other MSCJ programs and ask our curriculum advisory group. Changes will be submitted through governance next fall.
(8) **Change in Graduate and online assessment:** Relevant language is as follows: For graduate and online program assessment, consider an improved capstone program evaluation through a comprehensive examination, standardized writing component with some external review (possibly including the agency supervisor from the student's internship experience), or other means developed by the department. A trans-modal curriculum and performance evaluation process, where significant common course requirements that assess course learning outcomes are compared among traditional, accelerated face-to-face and online modes of delivery would provide increased assessment documentation. Full-time faculty supervision of accelerated and online faculty would be a significant segment of this assessment effort.

**Departmental response**—We believe that these ideas are worth further study. We are going to survey other programs for ideas on these issues, and consult our advisory Board.

**ASSESSMENT RESULTS:**

All students enrolled in MSCJ 580 completed the course successfully. The current Instructor for MSCJ 580, Dr. Wayne Anderson, preserves copies of the final research papers for review if necessary.

The results from the MSCJ Program Assessment Instrument were generally favorable. Students were generally satisfied with the faculty and the institution. Most students offered multiple constructive suggestions regarding the curriculum and course sequencing. One or more students expressed a desire for new courses, or curriculum changes in the following areas: (1) More Corrections based courses and less emphasis on Law Enforcement courses; (2) More courses blending theory and practice such as the Policy Development Topics course. (3) More flexibility in the curriculum to allow greater choice for the students.
Additionally, a few students have suggested that the MSCJ curriculum is too repetitive in certain areas (ex Organizational Behavior and Human Resource management) Finally, several students have relayed suggestions about the course sequencing in the MSCJ program (ex offer core courses more often)

The vast majority of MSCJ students passed their courses with a grade of B or above during 2006. Grade records of Departmental faculty indicate a grade of "C" for a few students in selected courses. Students evaluated faculty in each Departmental course These course evaluations provide additional guidance on curricular and pedagogical issues.

As earlier mentioned, the MSCJ program was reviewed during the Program Review in 2006. While the review was generally positive, the team made several recommendations regarding the MSCJ program and the curriculum. During the 2007-8 Academic year, the Department will be working with its key constituents to implement many of the changes recommended in the Program review. Given that the Program is entering its 10th year, and taking the Degree online, this is an ideal time to implement change.