

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice (BSCJ)

Administrative or Educational Support Unit

Spring 2004

Assessment Period Covered

June 30, 2004

Date Submitted

**Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:
Institutional Mission/Goal(s) Reference:**

Texas A & M International University is committed to the preparation of students for leadership roles in their chosen profession and in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse, state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A & M International University is a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

College/University Goals(s)Supported: Provide a curriculum that teaches current and relevant Criminal Justice material and that facilitates employment.

Intended Administrative Objectives:

- 1.** Students completing the baccalaureate program will have a basic understanding of the field of Criminal Justice.
- 2.** Graduates at the baccalaureate level will be prepared to perform to the satisfaction of employers in Criminal Justice jobs.
- 3.** Students completing the baccalaureate program will be prepared for a career in criminal justice.

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Intended Administrative or Educational Support Objective:

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1. Students completing the baccalaureate program will have a basic understanding of the field of Criminal Justice.

First Means of Assessment for Objective Identified Above:

1a. Means of Unit Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Graduating seniors will take a standardized criminal justice examination that measures their basic understanding of the field of Criminal Justice. The average score on the examination should be 70 percent.

1a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected

Scores for the most recent testing period, Spring 2004 have been tabulated. Scores in parentheses indicate % performance for 19 students who took the ACAT in May 2004. The ACAT is subdivided into nine parts, including correction processes (32%), criminal justice systems (44%), criminal law (34%), criminology (54%), juvenile justice (50%), law enforcement (48%), legal aspects (33%), research methods (44%), and administration (46%). Criminology, juvenile justice, law enforcement, research methods, and administration were the strongest among the nine areas, with the weakest areas being criminal law, corrections processes, and legal aspects. Overall performance for the 19 students was 32%. Compared with Fall 2003, these students didn't do as well, as the Fall 2003 students averaged 70% overall on the ACAT (N = 18).

One tentative explanation for these differences is that in both for the Fall

2003 and Spring 2004, the sample of graduating students was small relative to the total number of graduating seniors in criminal justice. A second explanation is that no credit was given for taking this voluntary examination. A third explanation is that although the test appears to be fairly general, it may be that certain topics are covered in greater detail on ACAT than are emphasized in the actual coursework taken by students at TAMIU. It would be premature to conclude that score average fluctuations from one semester to the next, on a test that is taken on a strictly voluntary basis, has no incentives for students to do well, and has not been tested for validity or reliability as it pertains specifically to TAMIU students are indicative of program deficiencies or weaknesses.

1a. Use of Results to Improve Unit Services:

Nineteen graduating seniors took the standardized criminal justice examination in May 2004. Scoring irregularities were reported, in that some students did not indicate their names or identifying numbers on their examinations. This made it difficult to reach substantive and tentative conclusions about the relation between student GPAs and ACAT performance. No strong indicators emerged, at least at this and the previous ACAT administration, that these results should be used to alter present program content or to make specific improvements in the formats of particular courses associated with areas where student scores were particularly low. More data are needed before unit services can be improved in productive ways.

A preliminary analysis of the May 2004 ACAT scores show that although the scores for these students in the nine (9) subareas were systematically lower than the originally anticipated 70% or higher performance level articulated in previous SACS reports, the standard deviations were particularly large for certain subareas such as juvenile justice, law enforcement, criminology, and criminal justice systems. Taking into account these standard deviations, the norm of 70% was encompassed by at least four of these nine subscales.

Another factor that must be considered is that 13 out of 19 students were transfer students from other schools. In most cases, these involved the transfer of numerous Criminal Justice credits from community college courses, where the Criminal Justice faculty at TAMIU had no control over the quality of instruction or programming. Thus, to this extent at least, there arise certain validity and reliability problems that are beyond the scope of this report to address in any conclusive or systematic way. It is anticipated that this particular problem will continue in future semesters, since large numbers of transfer students from local community colleges have acquired substantial course hours in Criminal Justice before taking additional coursework from present TAMIU Criminal Justice faculty. Furthermore, most of the courses taken by the transfer students are the core courses we require of our own 4-year students; thus, the ACAT scores,

which reflect performance levels in our primary core curricula are based largely on transfer student performance from these core courses taken elsewhere.

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2. Graduates at the baccalaureate level will be prepared to perform to the satisfaction of employers in Criminal Justice jobs.

First Means of Assessment for Objective Identified Above:

2a. Means of Unit Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Students are required to take part in an internship program during their senior year, working in a public agency related to Criminal Justice. Evaluations by external internship managers will rate the level of performance of each intern. At least 80 percent of the interns will be rated excellent or good by the internship manager.

2a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected

100 percent of all interns for Spring 2004 were rated excellent or good by their internship program manager.

2a. Use of Results to Improve Unit Services:

The scale used for ratings has been expanded to a five-point Likert scale to encourage more specific ratings of interns. Additional criteria were added to the ratings to generate more specific information.

Second Means of Assessment for Objective Identified Above:

2b. Means of Unit Assessment & Criteria for Success

Graduating seniors will be surveyed to gather supporting data concerning how well the degree in Criminal Justice prepared them for Criminal Justice jobs. At least 80 percent will strongly agree or agree on a five-point Likert scale that the degree prepared them well for such jobs.

2b. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

90 percent of the graduating seniors surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that the program prepared them for Criminal Justice jobs.

2b. Use of Results to Improve Unit Service:

The number of students who responded (19) is somewhat small to be used as the basis for deciding whether this particular goal was met. We will continue to ask this question of future graduating seniors until the number of responses is sufficient to conclude that our goal was met. However, there is considerable improvement from the Fall 2003 respondents compared with the latter Spring 2004 respondents on how well the Criminal Justice degree prepared them for jobs.

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Graduates of the baccalaureate program will be prepared for graduate study.

First Means of Assessment for Objective Identified Above:

3.a. Means of Unit Assessment & Criteria for Success:

Acceptance rates in post-baccalaureate programs have not yet been gathered.

It is unknown at this time how many students out of the Criminal Justice graduates have applied and been accepted into advanced graduate study.

3.a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected

At this time, the Criminal Justice program faculty members have no data for this means of assessment.

3.a. Use of Results to Improve Unit Services:

Because program faculty members have no data for this means of assessment, they can make recommendations at for changes to the program at this time.

Second Means of Assessment for Objective Identified Above:

3.b. Means of Unit Assessment & Criteria for Success

Graduates with a BA in Criminal Justice and who have entered graduate programs will be surveyed in one year to gather supporting information about whether the BA prepared them for graduate study. The responses will be measured according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1" (not at all) to "5" (very well). At least 80 percent of those responding will agree that the BA in Criminal Justice prepared them well for their respective programs of graduate study.

3.b. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:

No information has been obtained thus far, since the first contingent of graduating seniors and graduate applicants has not commenced their first year of graduate study. When this information is subsequently gathered in the Summer 2005, it will be reported and summarized in the Fall 2005 Assessment Report.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

SOURCE	LOCATION/Special Instructions