

Annual Program Report 2024-2025

(For programs not using Planning & Self Study software for the annual report)

The report(s) should be inclusive of all levels, degrees (i.e. certificates, bachelor's and master's), modalities and locations.

Department: Behavioral Sciences

Department Chair: Richard Wiebe

Department Assessment Committee Contact: Richard Wiebe

This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research and Planning by June 1, 2024.

Section I: Program Assessment (please complete this section for each program in your department)

Program: _____ Criminal Justice Program _____

A. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment

PLO #	PLO – Stated in assessable terms	Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)	When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?
1.	<i>Criminal justice knowledge</i>	Our goal is to conform to the standards of the Massachusetts Police Incentive Pay Program, also known as the “Quinn Bill”. Our undergraduate CJ program was last certified under this bill in the fall of 2009. The Quinn Bill standards formed	Schedule to be determined in AY 25-26	2022-23 < or this year, if we do it? Unclear what they want. >

		the foundation of the Quality Standards of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS), the preeminent international academic society dedicated to the theory and practice of criminal justice and criminal justice education. The ACJS standards have been recently revised, while those of the PCPPIP have not. The ACJS standards for 4-year undergraduate programs, most recently revised in 2022, may be found at Section B (Program Structure & Curriculum) of the following document: https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		
2.	<i>Understanding of crime and crime causation</i>	https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		2022-23
3.	<i>Critical thinking</i>	https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		2021-22
4.	<i>Effective writing</i>	https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		2021-22
5.	<i>Moral and ethical reasoning</i>	https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		2021-22
6.	<i>Quantitative analysis</i>	https://members.acjs.org/ap/CloudFile/Download/rJWKVQRp		2019-20

- II. **PLO Assessment** (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.)

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

PLO # (from above)	Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral	When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 th	To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)	What is the target set for the PLO?	Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”?

	presentation with rubric, etc.)	year, 1st year, etc.)		(criteria for success)	
1	None this year.				Loop is open.
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

The University refocused its assessment efforts several years ago. Since that time, we have tried several assessment methods to measure our PLOs and have not felt totally comfortable with any of them. After recognizing that the results of our 2022-23 assessment instruments either did not give us the data we needed or indicated a need to revisit our curriculum we did not do any program-wide assessment for 2024-25. Instead, we spent the year in ongoing discussion about assessment, mission, vision, and program learning outcomes, while dealing with the downsizing of our program and a diminished student body. We have been confronting the big question: What can our program reasonably hope to accomplish in the area of student learning outcomes?

We know that we have fallen behind on assessment, concerning which we have had more trouble reaching consensus than is the norm for our program. Based on the work we have done over the past two years, we hope, by the spring of 2026, to achieve intra-programmatic clarity and unity on this issue, and to pilot an assessment instrument for the 2025-26 assessment report that reflects our new consensus regarding student learning outcomes and how to measure them outside of the traditional classroom setting. We intend to finish our various projects that will lead to a useable assessment instrument: revisit our PLOs in light of the recent revisions of the ACJS quality standards, create a course map that shows shows which courses address each of our revised PLOs, create a workable assessment instrument for each PLO, and establish a multi-year schedule to ensure that each is addressed in a timely fashion.

Summary of Findings: Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Reflection Prompt	Narrative Response
<p>Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</p>	<p>In addition to dedicated program assessments, we use successful completion of our substantive capstone course, CJ 4100, <i>Colloquium</i>; and our methods and analysis capstone course, either CJ 3140, <i>Data Analysis</i> or CJ/GEOG 3004, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for CJ to help determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree.</p> <p>We have no licensure requirements for the overall CJ program. However, because we are certified under the Commonwealth’s Police Career Incentive Pay Program, also known as the Quinn Bill, we must adhere to curriculum and staffing standards maintained by the Board of Higher Education.</p> <p>Because they are considered active members of a Municipal Police Training Committee police academy, our Police Program students are monitored on other factors throughout their undergraduate years. They must satisfy minimum GPA standards and adhere to standards of conduct that do not apply to our other CJ students. While we believe that this monitoring does in fact increase our confidence that our students have achieved the stated outcomes for their degree, this monitoring does not come free.</p> <p>We have a full-time Police Academy Director responsible for only those students in our Police Program, as well as a Police Program Academic Coordinator who receives a 6-credit yearly Alternate Professional Responsibility to conduct this work. Without similar resources, it would be impossible for us to gather as much evidence about our traditional CJ students as we do for our Police Program students.</p> <p>Prior to the 2022-23 school year, we most often used a blind review system to evaluate significant work from our capstone courses to assess whether the work, and by implications our students, have met the program’s outcome standards. Work is graded simply on a 3-point scale – failed to meet, met, or exceeded the standard. Faculty do these assessments. They do not assess work from</p>

	<p>sections they have taught, and they do not know the identities of the authors of the work they assess.</p> <p>In 2022-23, we administered an instrument to a self-selected sample of 71 CJ students that hypothesized that substantive knowledge of criminal justice topics would be positively correlated with the number of college credits earned. When analysis failed on balance to support our hypothesis, we realized that we needed to revisit the program assessment process on every level. This discussion has occupied us for the past two years.</p>
<p>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</p>	<p>Although we may appoint ad hoc committees for certain tasks, the full CJ faculty functions as both the curriculum and assessment committees.</p>
<p>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)</p>	<p>The changes we made this past year, which are included in the table in Part C of Section I below, were in response to an accumulating body of understanding that began with our 2020 program review, and not in response to any particular recent program assessments. During the upcoming academic year, we will be continuing our internal discussion about the relationship among our curriculum, learning outcomes, and program assessment. We now have a greater understanding of what we can expect from our post-COVID, post-enrollment contraction student body, which will aid us in this iterative process.</p>

B. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan (This is an independent plan from what is reported in this document). Our program assessment plan is a work in progress.
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success. See comments above – we intend to have a new assessment plan in place by the end of the 2025-26 academic year.
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one? X Yes

C. Program Review Action Plan or External action Letter/Report

Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)

I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

i. Date of most recent Review:

ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Comments	CJ Response – 9/28/21	CJ Response – 8/12/25
Review CJ Curriculum	Focus on - 1. Streamlining CJ electives 2. Creation of course rotation 3. Stable scheduling of CJ courses	Immediately	Critical precursor to CJ Department	We have begun our review, with a view towards advancing social and community justice.	We have eliminated several electives that no longer served the needs of our program. We have added a Crime & Communities course in
Expand CJ Grad Program	1. Create additional track 2. Expand marketing 3. Grow applicant pool 4. Add graduate faculty	Immediately	Critical precursor to CJ Department	We are in the process of gradually adding courses to our roster to serve a community-oriented track, as we gradually add to our student body. Would be well-served by a marketing	We have added a Community Justice concentration to our CJ Graduate Program. We have kept our Police Academy concentration and have revised and updated our third concentration. We have increased enrollments and added several faculty to our roster.

				analysis, but current CJ resources and staffing do not permit such an analysis. Our analysis of best practices in 21 st -century community-oriented CJ graduate education and of community needs and existing resources currently underway, with the goal of facilitating social and community justice.	
Institute for Social, Community, and Criminal Justice	Initial focus on the integration of the “Policing and Conflict Resolution Project” with active participation of Human Services, and sociology.	Fall 2021	Critical precursor to CJ Department	The Institute is anticipated to arise organically from other efforts to increase social and community justice. Unrealistic and unwise to create an institute without laying proper groundwork, including a needs assessment and funding source, and in the absence of a discrete CJ department.	Given the institution’s and our program’s trajectory, we will not be creating this Institute in the foreseeable future.
Develop Advising Coordinator Role	Identify mechanism to fund and hire PT faculty to -- 1. Coordinate the advising of 200 plus undergraduate students 2. Coordinate assignments of CJ students to CJ faculty 3. Coordinate advising across programs to ensure consistent and accurate advising and ease transfer 4. Create and maintain an advising website.	Fall discussion for Spring 2022 hire		It’s not the responsibility of a single program, a subset of a larger department, to identify funding sources. The scope of job, which should be combined with the internship coordinator position, has been defined by the CJ program.	We have adequate advising of our reduced student body. We facilitate transfers between programs within our department and between programs within our department and outside our department. We do not have an advising website, but note that the University has introduced College Scheduler to facilitate the advising process.
Develop Internship Coordinator	Identify mechanism to fund and hire PT faculty to work with internship sites, both existing	Spring 22 discussion		A single position of Internship and Advising Coordinator should be	We have not been granted funds, nor identified any sources of funds from outside the University, to create this

Role (may be added to above role will impact current APRs)	and future, which will include internship supervision and teaching the internship seminar.	for Fall 2022 hire		created, with a single hiring date. The individual should be committed to the CJ department and its vision, as well as the vision of the University. A full-time person would also be better-positioned to advance the University's commitment to high-impact and experiential learning than either a part-time faculty member or a full-time faculty member carrying out an "alternative professional responsibility."	position. We still handle our Internship Coordination internally.
Improve the Availability of On-Campus Academy Facilities	This is an ongoing process, and because of annual and summer delivery may be difficult given university space constraints.	Ongoing		We appreciate any progress made towards this goal.	Conflicts between the University and the Police Academy for facilities have been reduced. We have been granted the use of several University spaces for specific dates and times, but still do not have a dedicated crime lab.
Create a Criminal Justice Academic Department	After the development of the above initiatives, if the CJ program continues to demonstrate that its complexity and quality requires a distinct department, then prepare governance proposal.	Summer 2022 discussion and AUC proposal in Fall 22.	Will require analysis of conversion of APRs	Creation of Institute unlikely within current departmental structure.	Given the realities of a shrinking university, we have pivoted from the idea of a separate Criminal Justice department and have begun the process of integrating the various programs within the Behavioral Sciences department more closely. The loss of faculty in each of our undergraduate programs – CJ, Human Services, and Sociology – has, unfortunately, hindered this process.
	Other Proposed Actions				
Serve New Potential Student Pools: Prisoners	Establish an inside-out program with local prison(s) that would see inmates and Fitchburg students sharing classes	Spring 2023		Would advance social and community justice by better preparing prisoners for their re-entry into society and providing our students with opportunities for	We have examined this idea, and were able to teach a course in a local community justice center, but barriers at the federal level make it impossible for a modestly-funded mid-level state university to seriously engage with prisoner education.

				enlightening and empathetic connections with the clients of the CJ system	
Serve New Potential Student Pools: Community Providers	Ensure that new CJ graduate track attracts individuals working outside the CJ system but with overlapping populations, including but not limited to individuals dealing with homelessness, mental health issues, domestic violence, child maltreatment, delinquency prevention, gang prevention, addiction, and re-entry from prison into society.	ongoing		Fitchburg State could provide a template for other master's programs and a node of cooperation for community service providers.	
Increase Empathy and Understanding among Police Program students and Acceptance of the Police among Other Future Service Providers	Create a first-year experience and/or other interdisciplinary experience for Police Program students that will integrate them with other students who also focus on the betterment of society but perhaps with a different perspective, so that they may begin to understand each another's worldviews, morals, and motives.	Fall 2022 or 2023		Self-selection into the CJ Police Program ensures that many students will resist ideas that they perceive of as "anti-police", simply because they imply that the police cannot handle every problem on their own. Similarly, people in the helping professions outside of law enforcement do not always understand or trust the police.	There is no separate First Year Experience for the Police Program. It is hoped that the existing FYE sections, which mixes Police Program students with students outside their program, provides a valuable experience for all parties. Police Program students do take two Human Services classes as part of their required curriculum, in which they work closely with both Human Services faculty and students.

iii. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program? _____ Yes

II. Programs with external Accreditation:

- i. Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the program/department.
- ii. Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.
- iii. Date and nature of next review and type of review.

List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report.	Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board or bar pass rates; employment rates, etc.) (If required.)	Update on fulfilling the action letter/report or on meeting the key performance indicators.
Our last Quinn Bill review took place in the fall of 2009. We do not know whether any future reviews will take place. We have had two program reviews in the meantime.	There are no indicators of this kind required of our program	

Section II - Departmental Outcomes

A. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

The Behavioral Sciences department has no department-wide strategic initiatives at this time. We are, however, in the process of finalizing our revisions to our departmental policies, a task we began in the fall of 2024.

Accomplished Initiatives AY24-25 Add more rows as needed	Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3	Indicate (X) if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal

Planned Initiatives for AY 25-26 Add more rows as needed	Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3	Indicate (X) if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal

B. Departmental Accomplishments and Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

- 24-25 Accomplishments not captured above*
- Initiatives that you may be considering for 25-26 academic year that you did not already capture above*
- Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share*

