Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Standards
The Master of Science program at Westfield State College demonstrates quality and effectiveness. The program has an assessment plan in place that allows for the determination that the program is meeting its objectives.

- Theoretical thinking – ability to interpret problems and solutions using comprehensive theoretical knowledge
- Productive thinking – analysis and application of management and administrative techniques related to criminal justice
- Analytical thinking – the ability to critically think in terms of research and evaluation.

- In addition to the required courses, students are required to take electives with the objective of:
  - practical thinking - to consider what should be done and to synthesis ideas to generate different solutions to criminal justice issues.

- The final culminating experience achieves the objective of:
  - comprehension – the ability to understand and evaluate the interrelationship of research, ideas, and theories presented in throughout their coursework and to apply their knowledge to unique situations and settings.

Assessment Plan
The MS-CJ program is able to demonstrate that program graduates have acquired highly developed knowledge through the use of traditional means of assessment including successful completion of required and elective courses and exit requirements including comprehensive exams, thesis, and capstone experiences.

Course syllabi are aligned with program objectives, as shown in Appendix A. The program utilizes course assignments, exams, and other written course work to assess course specific learning outcomes. In total, these address the core standards established by the Board of Higher Education, Quinn Bill Accreditation Review.

Throughout coursework, there are several methods of assessment including:

- retention rates,
- minimum GPA requirements for continuance,
- student evaluations,
- Department Chair/Coordinator classroom visitations, and
- Dean of DGCE oversight
Finally upon completion, there are several assessment features including:

- culminating exit requirement including comprehensive exams, thesis, and capstone experience,
- monitoring of comprehensive exams for content, relevancy, and success rates,
- master’s thesis and capstone committees, and
- monitoring of graduation rates

The desired provision to more systematically analyze whether our students are achieving the program outcomes. Graduate faculty meet often to discuss how to ensure our students are achieving the learning outcomes of the program. Since our last review, faculty members have been made more aware of clearly stating desired learning outcomes on syllabus. The comprehensive exam, which is updated every semester, is constantly changing to reflect program outcomes. Additionally, the Criminal Justice department has created an advisory board, which allows us to see what employer’s desire in their employees and also whether or not we are meeting those goals.