

# Indiana State University

2006 - 2007 Academic Annual Report

Department of Criminology

## Vision Statement

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**Below is your vision statement from previous years. Please take this opportunity to review it and if necessary update it.**

Criminology is an empirical science that studies the nature and extent of crime, the causes of crime, and the development of methods designed to effectively prevent and control criminal behavior. Crime affects nearly everyone in our society in some manner. The resulting public concern and fascination about crime makes criminology one of the most dynamic and fastest growing academic fields in the nation. We expect our students to share fully in the intellectual and social life of our Department and the University. We strive for our student to be well informed and to develop close bonds with our faculty. Our students are expected to achieve excellence in the academic skills expected of social scientists as well as in the applied skills expected of practitioners in criminal justice agencies. Thus, our curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, reading, oral and written communication, and organizational and management skills within our discipline. Our graduates should meet or exceed all standards specified in the College of Arts and Sciences general educational requirements and demonstrate writing, computation, and communication skills common to persons educated in the liberal arts.

## Year in Review

Accomplishments

**As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-2007 year that will contribute to this effort? [Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.]**

1. Program of Distinction – We are in our first year as a Program of Distinction and are proceeding with two major objectives: (a) to increase our grant and contract research support from outside sources, and (b) to inform criminal justice professionals and citizens of Indiana about crime phenomena (primarily by conducting and publishing the results of a periodic Indiana Crime Survey).
2. Promising Scholars Research – We are in the final stages of a research project conducted by Drs. Barton-Bellessa and Shon pursuant to their selection as Promising Scholars last year. Preliminary results have been published and the final report and several professional publications are forthcoming. The research project was to study homicides in El Salvador and to develop techniques to increase the solvability of those crimes.
3. University of Zagreb Exchange Program – In May, 2006, 10 students from Croatia enrolled for a class on our campus (along with about 15 ISU students) as a part of our on-going exchange program with the University of Zagreb. In June, 2007, Dr. Skelton will travel to Zagreb to teach a class in international issues in criminal justice, and he and Dr. Huckabee will present papers at an international conference at the university in mid-June. ISU Criminology faculty periodically travel to Croatia for short-term seminars and presentations, and the Croatians will return to ISU in 2008.
4. National Civil Police of El Salvador – We have continued our partnership with the National Civil Police of El Salvador (PNC). Drs. Skelton, Huckabee and Woods have periodically provided consulting services to the PNC. Drs.

Barton-Bellessa and Shon have conducted a study of homicides for the PNC. Carlos Ponce, Chief of the Center for Criminology and Police Sciences of the PNC (and an ISU Criminology alumnus), traveled to Indiana in September to consult with our faculty on research about Central American gangs and to present a training session at the National Major Gang Task Force annual meeting in Indianapolis. 5. CTI Partnership – We have continued our partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction (begun 8 years ago). We have awarded over 100,000 student credit hours for IDOC personnel who have completed the Correctional Training Institute. We have hosted numerous professional meetings on campus for the staff of correctional facilities and for the staff of the IDOC central administration. David Donahue, IDOC Commissioner, visited our campus in April, 2007 make a presentation to a meeting of three separate ISU Criminology classes and to consult with the Criminology faculty about future research needs of the IDOC. 6. Career Fair – Each spring semester, we conduct a Career Fair for students in all ISU departments who are seeking employment in the criminal justice field. This year, we had approximately 50 agencies, ranging from city and county police departments to the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Secret Service, who were available to distribute information and interview prospective applicants. Many of the agency representatives were ISU Criminology alumni.

### Research and Scholarship

**What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship that is focused primarily on contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?**

The faculty have been productive scholars this past year. The ten tenure-track faculty produced more than 20 published professional articles and about 15 professional presentations at various conferences. Additionally, the provided consulting and training services to numerous police and correctional agencies. We are satisfied with the level of effort and the accomplishments of the faculty, but dissatisfied with the present situation which leaves little faculty time or energy for research because we are under-staffed. Our department is particularly good at creating scholarship which is useful to practitioners. Although some of our publications are of a theoretical nature, the bulk of our work is directed at examining issues of relevance to criminal justice policy makers. We work well with criminal justice agency managers and are given unusual access to information. We need to improve our ability to generate outside revenue to support research. This is one of the major objectives of our Program of Distinction project.

### Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

**What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?**

We have had little success in the past year in reference to grants and contracts (largely because we do not have enough faculty to staff a significant research effort and teach all of our classes). On the other hand, our faculty continue to provide professional service because (a) we view it as a professional obligation, and (b) it keeps us current with the work of practitioners. For example, we have periodically been involved in police training programs (Prof. Decker provides several training programs for police agencies in criminal procedure; Dr. Skelton provides training and consultation for many sheriffs' departments; several of the faculty provide consulting services to the National Civil Police of El Salvador; Drs. Huckabee and Grimes provide consulting services to correctional agencies; Dr. Polizzi consults with correctional and mental health service providers; Dr. Hamm is a consultant to federal agencies on terrorism; Dr. Roy offers consulting and editorial services to domestic and international correctional agencies). We are not satisfied. We hope that circumstances

will allow us to replace the faculty we have lost to retirements and resignations in the past few years. If we had sufficient staff to allow released time for research, our faculty would be more inclined to seek outside funding for more significant research. We serve the professional criminal justice community quite well. Virtually every week, one of our faculty will be called by a criminal justice practitioner in need of advice, help with a project, or assistance in finding information. Many of our faculty have themselves been practitioners and are uniquely qualified to work as bridges between the academic world and the world of practice. We need to improve our ability to generate outside revenue to support research. This is one of the major objectives of our Program of Distinction project.

### Teaching

**We would like to highlight innovative approaches to teaching. Has your department developed any pedagogies or practices you'd like to share with us? Please describe briefly.**

A number of our faculty have developed (or rather, continue to develop) techniques which may be called innovative. For example, many of our students are heavily influenced by the many television shows with "CSI" in the title. Dr. Woods (a former police officer) and Dr. Kohr (our adjunct professor who is also a forensic pathologist and the county coroner) teach the reality of scientific crime investigation. Dr. Woods has developed "hands-on" exercises for crime scene investigation by creating crime scenes around the campus and then supervising his students in their evidence collection. Dr. Kohr teaches the actual medical procedures for autopsies and other medical investigations into cause of death. We also emphasize experiential learning in our classrooms. For example, Mr. Reeves, in his introductory correctional administration course, has his students actually design new correctional facilities and try their hand at making "shanks" (illicit weapons manufactured by prison inmates). In our law classes, Drs. Skelton, Decker and Cannady (all lawyers) use case method instruction to require students to simulate the process of legal advocacy. In our graduate correctional administration course, Mr. Motley (our adjunct formerly with the Federal Bureau of Prisons and former Deputy Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Correction) regularly takes his students inside the various correctional facilities in Indiana for a first-hand look at the system.

### Course Scheduling/Enrollment Management

**How is the department making sure that students are able to get the classes they need to graduate in a timely manner?**

All courses are offered on campus and by distance to ensure orderly progression to the degree. Even though we have experienced diminished staffing in recent years, we have compensated by offering few sections (with larger enrollments) to accommodate the students. Advisers attempt to induce each student to prepare a plan of study (especially for distance students) to guide them to degree completion. On some occasions, faculty have volunteered to teach a required class one-on-one (and without additional compensation) so that a student's graduation will not be delayed. We analyze the enrollment trends and attempt to project course by course needs several years into the future.

### Outreach

**What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)**

We now have available Internet versions of all required courses (and many electives). We have been very successful with Web-based instruction, and most of our courses now utilize Blackboard whether they are on campus or offered by distance. We also attempt to offer evening classes (especially graduate classes) on a rotating basis. The bulk of our summer session classes are offered

on-line to accommodate both distance and on-campus students. We are presently working with CIRT to develop Breeze-capable classes with the intention to blend some distance and on-campus offerings.

### Assessment

#### **Please share your stated student learning outcomes.**

Our graduates should demonstrate writing, computation and communication skills common to persons educated in the liberal arts, and they should have studied a broad range of academic subjects in the general education program. Our graduates should have acquired a habit of dispassionate (and when appropriate, passionate) inquiry and the power of critical thinking. In addition, our graduates should be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge base in criminology and criminal justice.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

#### Community Engagement I

#### **Please summarize your faculty's efforts in community engagement this year.**

Virtually all of our faculty have provide services for community engagement this past year. Efforts have ranged from the international (our involvement with the University of Zagreb and our assistance to the National Civil Police of El Salvador, editorial services for journals in Croatia and Canada) to the national (consultation with the National Institute of Justice, the MERLOT Criminal Justice Editorial Board, the Federal Correctional Complex Community Relations Board) to the state (our CTI Partnership with the Indiana Department of Correction, our consultative services to various police agencies across the state, services to the Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force) to the local (our involvement with the Terre Haute Police Department promotional examinations). Our faculty serve on various advisory and governing boards for community institutions, and they volunteer their services from time to time to assist community agencies with problems and projects.

#### Experiential Learning

#### **What is your vision for experiential learning in your department?**

Since the creation of our department 35 years ago, we have utilized experiential learning in our courses. With a few exceptions (e.g., courses focused on theory only), our courses are intended to prepare criminal justice practitioners and criminal justice scholars for their future work. Thus, we incorporate experiential learning ranging from field trips to correctional facilities to moot court competitions to crime scene simulations to semester-long internships with working criminal justice agencies.

#### Fundraising Activities

#### **What steps have you taken to support fundraising activities in your department? How can your efforts be supported?**

Although the faculty recognize the importance of fundraising for ISU, most view this as an activity for administrators and not faculty (particularly since the faculty view themselves as overburdened already). Nonetheless, we have made some efforts to assist in the fundraising effort. We have met with appropriate ISU personnel to discuss alternative approaches to fundraising and to identify possible alumni-donors. We have also suggested that ISU personnel contact vendors of criminal justice equipment to see if there is interest, for example, in equipping our crime laboratory. We make an effort to maintain contact with our alumni base to solicit their support (including financial support). Unfortunately (at least for development activities), our alumni tend to have careers in public service professions which do not produce the high income which might make them significant

donors. We do, however, receive modest donations annually from alumni.

## Quality

### Quality

**Please provide 1-2 suggestions to increase the ability of your department or the University to meet the criteria above.**

Our greatest need is for an adequate number of faculty to free up individual time from our heavy teaching load to allow more time for the other activities covered by this report. Along with increased faculty, we also need the resources to cover the costs of professional development, course design, assessment instruments and the other necessary components of the report criteria. The suggestions are not offered by way of complaint, but rather as an acknowledgment of the reality of our situation. Certainly, ISU has struggled in recent years because of our budget crisis, our falling enrollments, and the new competition from Ivy Tech. We believe that the situation will improve gradually, and in the meantime, we will do the best we can with what we have.

### Feedback

**This section is to allow you to share your ideas for enhancing enrollment, dealing with budget and other challenges facing the university community.**

Our greatest challenge has been the lack of instructional funds to hire sufficient personnel (either tenure track appointments or adjuncts) to staff the classes. Again, this is not intended as a complaint, but rather as an acknowledgment of reality. We believe that the ISU administration has done its best to provide resources, and we believe that we have been treated reasonably and fairly. We have responded to the challenge of limited resources by reducing the number of sections offered (e.g., offering 2 or 3 sections of classes which historically have permitted 4 or 5 sections) and by reducing the frequency of offerings (e.g., offering a course only once per year instead of every semester). Of course, this has resulted in much larger classes and a greatly increased workload for faculty. We have also deferred offering a number of electives which enrich our program but which are not essential for degree completion. We have now reached the realistic limits of our ability to teach the classes necessary for our students to earn their degrees. We cannot increase enrollments in the absence of instructional funds and personnel. We are already among the five largest departments in the university in terms of undergraduate majors and graduate students, and we are the cheapest to operate. If the budgeting system were even partially related to departmental productivity we might expect more enthusiasm for increasing enrollments. If our department could be assured of some reasonable return on any increased enrollments in order to support the increased instructional burden, we could greatly increase enrollments by expanding our distance education programs (although enrollments will undoubtedly be negatively impacted by the planned increases in fees for out-of-state students).