

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors change the name of the Department of Criminal Justice to the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, effective Fall 2020.

Background

This recommendation is the consequence of the evolution of the discipline and department, the particular interests of current and prospective students, and the expertise of departmental faculty. The current title does not accurately represent the current discipline or the curriculum here at Wayne State University. Criminology and criminal justice are multi-disciplinary fields of study with overlapping pedagogical and research interests. The two fields are steadily merging into one. This overlap is evidenced, both here at WSU and across the country, in a number of ways.

- 1) Criminology and criminal justice are research supported and theory driven disciplines that overlap in seeking explanations of crime and criminality, socio-political reactions to crime, and the behavior of criminal justice institutions and officials. A separation of these academic endeavors is artificial.
- 2) Faculty and students of the Criminal Justice Department engage in classic criminological research, criminal justice research, and research that overlaps these two orientations.
- 3) Criminal justice Ph.D. departments produce a significant number of criminology graduates, and criminal justice doctorates are hired in criminology departments.
- 4) The major textbooks in criminology and criminal justice as well as juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice contain overlapping substantive information and chapters.
- 5) The major journals are similarly converging in content.
- 6) The two primary professional societies associated with each field, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and the American Society of Criminology, have highly overlapping memberships, overlapping conference research themes and have formed a collaborative research partnership.
- 7) Combining the titles of Criminology and Criminal Justice into one department has significant precedents at other universities. For example, the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice is considered one of the highest ranked such departments in the U.S. Many other examples exist.

The change will better reflect the expertise of faculty, the curriculum in the department, faculty scholarship, teaching interests, and academic vision of the department. Furthermore, it will clarify perceptions of the department and attract more students to WSU.

Current Students

This name change will have no detrimental effect on current students. Current students will continue to follow their current plans of work (there is no accompanying change in curriculum). Students interested in graduate school will, however, benefit from having a degree title that more accurately represents their curriculum.

Budget and Resource Requirements

The operating budget of the department will not be significantly affected by this name change. Aside from limited signage and business cards, the majority of needed changes will be electronic (e.g., website).

Approvals

The proposed name change of the department has been approved by the faculty and chair of the Department of Criminal Justice, the CLAS Faculty Council, the CLAS Faculty Assembly, the Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Provost.