

April 14, 2009

Dear Dr. Queener,

I am pleased to review the Master's of Science in Criminal Justice and Public Safety (MSCJPS) proposal from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. Please find my comments regarding the proposal below.

The MSCJPS proposal has a number of strengths. The most evident strengths include the letters of support from the various criminal justice and public safety agencies from throughout the state and the large number of potential students available for program. Additional strengths of the program include the highly qualified criminal justice faculty members and the eclectic nature of the courses offered. As such, I am confident the MSCJPS will be an attractive degree that will attract a large number of candidates.

Nevertheless, I have three major concerns regarding the proposal. All of these concerns are based on my four years experience as a graduate coordinator, my two years experience as the Eastern Kentucky University graduate council chair, and my decade of involvement in graduate education in the areas of criminal justice and public safety. Each of the weaknesses is outlined in detail below.

1. The most damning weakness of this proposal is the lack of a culminating experience for the students in the MSCJPS program. While the program has an admirable experiential requirement, each student entering the program will graduate simply by attending classes and either submitting a portfolio based on their prior work experience or participating in an internship with a local criminal justice or public safety agency. Practically all Master's programs that I am aware of that I would recommend as a quality Master's program have at least one of three culminating experiences: a thesis, a comprehensive exam, or a final project (designed so that the student is required to use their writing and research skills to create a project worthy of consideration for publication in a professional or academic journal). In each of these cases, the culminating experience accounts for six graduate hours and is designed so that the student will apply (with limited faculty supervision) the materials the student has learned in the coursework. In my opinion, if IUPUI wishes to deliver a high-quality MSCJPS program, some sort of culminating experience like those mentioned above should be required.

2. I would suggest that J501 be required for both tracks. Those concentrating in Public Safety also need to understand the theoretical perspectives used to understand why individuals engage in crime and criminality. My experience with students interested in Public Safety at ECU and with practitioners in public safety throughout the region is that they often lack a theoretical foundation regarding why individuals engage in criminality. Risk Analysis could be added to the public safety track as it currently is for the Criminal Justice track.

3. I'm not convinced the MSCJPS program can be delivered in a way that maintains academic quality in the department at both the graduate *and* undergraduate levels without hiring at least one additional faculty member. I would recommend hiring at least one more full-time tenure track faculty, preferably in the area of public safety who can also



teach some criminal justice courses, to avoid weakening the undergraduate major by having faculty members teach more graduate courses and fewer undergraduate courses. If the department chooses to adopt a culminating experience (which I hope they will), the workload of the current faculty will increase even more.

I understand that the recommended changes would require additional resources from the university and additional effort from departmental faculty. Nevertheless, if these changes are incorporated into the program, I can assure you that when I describe the program to prospective students, I can describe the program as a high-quality program delivered by high-quality faculty that produces high-quality graduates. If these changes are not incorporated (particularly numbers 1 and 3), I will not be able to make that recommendation.

