

Submission date: January 31, 2020

Program/s in this review: Corrections

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): N/A

Campuses where the program is delivered: Kenai Peninsula College (Kenai River Campus and Kachemak Bay campus)

Members of the program review committee:

Henry Haney, Co-Chair Business and Industry, KPC Campus

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1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

The Undergraduate Certificate in Corrections provides the academic background required for success in entry-level corrections positions enabling individuals to obtain employment, particularly as a Correctional Officer, Probation/Parole Officer, or a Criminal Justice Technician. This certificate program was made possible through \$50,000.00 initial seed money through Representative Paul Seaton and in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Corrections and the UAA Justice Center. The original intent of the program was the need to fill high demand jobs in Alaska (correctional officers), the lack of qualified workforce applicants, and the need to promote the field of Corrections to the Alaska Native communities via e-learning. Today, the program continues to be vital in promoting Corrections to the Alaska Native Community via e-learning, building ethical foundations for those employed in the field, and in attracting qualified applicants needed for high demand job areas (correctional, probation/parole, and pretrial enforcement officers). Corrections professionals play important roles in public safety and criminal justice. Correctional officers provide security and confinement for the nation's criminal offenders. Probation/parole officers conduct case management and assist in the movement of prisoners, direct individuals to rehabilitation programs and apprehend violators when public safety is in jeopardy. Pretrial Enforcement Officers created under Senate Bill 91 and continued in House Bill 49 promotes supervision of those alleged to have committed criminal acts pre-conviction. Criminal justice technicians assist institutional and field officers in a variety of duties within the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Department of Public Safety (DPS). These positions lead to secure, rewarding positions with excellent benefits and retirement.

Instruction includes criminal and restorative justice systems, courses in oral and written communication, and an introduction to theories of criminal behavior. Graduates will be competitive with non-Alaskans for corrections jobs within Alaska and in other states. These corrections certificate programs have been developed with thereby promoting further academic study within the University of Alaska. Specifically, graduates from the UEC may seamlessly transition into any Bachelor of Arts program; and specifically, into to the bachelor's in psychology, sociology, social work, human services, and criminal justice. Another common program that graduates have entered is the associate of science in Human Services offered at the Kenai Peninsula College.

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7-year trend; 1400 words or less)

The Corrections program has averaged 2 graduates per annually. Over the past few years starting in 2014 the Correctional system in Alaska was under attack. The media portrayed stories stating Corrections was "broken." The constant focus and negativity had a relatively large impact on student interest and enrollment. Data for 2018-2019 was not provided in the above table.

Data suggests that students are completing the program per the intended schedule, however since this program is a feeder program into other academic areas it is not uncommon for students to have additional credits. In addition to feeding other programs, it is common that students while completing other disciplines, have many of

the classes needed for certification as well and thus come to the program with many credit hours. This is a difficult area to distinguish. The Undergraduate Certificate required 31 credits during the years listed. Students are averaging completion with 32 credits.

The enrollment trend has been impacted as noted in the awards trend regarding political pressures and negative press. Students from 2014-2018 moved their interests as Corrections was being portrayed in a negative light. However, with the inception of Pretrial Enforcement and the need to fill and maintain Correctional Officer roles, it is anticipated that these trends will increase over the next few years. While several agencies do reflect a reduction to their budget in FY 21, Corrections (DOC), Public Safety (DPS), Dept of Law and the Court system all show increases showing that the program will likely trend upward.

The costs associated with the OEC are extremely minimal. Courses are taught by experienced adjuncts who work in the field. The program is offered 100% via e-learning.

The Corrections OEC is offered via e-learning at an extremely low cost to the University of Alaska. Many students enrolled in the program are dually enrolled in other programs and a cross-sharing occurs. Due to the cross-sharing, it is difficult to determine credit hours averaged or overall cost. When viewing the program in the lens of a microscope it is offered online by experienced adjuncts who work in the field. The program reaches out across borders and enrolls individuals from all over Alaska. The Alaska DOC is currently hurting for qualified correctional officers and is continuing to hire Pretrial, Probation and Parole Officers at an alarming rate. Students who are hired earn a very good wage with multiple benefits that come with working for the State of Alaska. Although enrollment trends have tended lower in recent years, it is anticipated that these numbers will rise as the needs have risen in the Alaska DOC once again and the negative media coverage and political climate have changed in regard to Corrections. This program is the only Corrections specific program in the State of Alaska.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

The Corrections program is offered 100% via e-learning to students throughout Alaska and the nation. Adjunct Faculty assigned has served over 20 years in Corrections and Policing within Alaska. The curriculum was specifically designed in coordination with the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC). The UEC was created as a pathway to further academic study, thus the one-year UEC fits nicely into a variety of associate or bachelor's degrees. Kenai Peninsula College prides itself in providing high quality academic deliveries in the online environment. As such the lead instructor within the Corrections program, has been trained in Quality Matters (QM) course design, peer reviewer training, academic advising, and has an Advanced Certificate in Online Teaching through the Online Learning Consortium. Course work within the UEC is on a rotating basis for internal QM designated course reviews. Kenai Peninsula College Corrections faculty collects data on a 3-year rotation, with assistance from Faculty Support Services at Kenai Peninsula College. The designated assessment program coordinator for Corrections coordinates course-level assessment and other assessment activities as needed. The assessment coordinator works with staff and faculty to assemble the data, compile required reports, and forward needed materials to the KPC Director and Dean of the Career and Technical College as required. The final report is reviewed by the program faculty before submitting it to UAA. The faculty of the Corrections program meet at least once a year, along with the Assessment Coordinator or Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, to review the data collected using the assessment tools. This results in recommendations for program changes that are designed to enhance performance relative to the program's objectives and outcomes. The results of the data collection, an interpretation of the results, and the recommended programmatic changes are forwarded in a formal report to the appropriate reporting channels by October 15 of each year. The proposed programmatic changes may be any action or change in policy that the faculty deems as being necessary to improve performance relative to programs objectives and outcomes. Recommended change as a result of assessment within the Corrections program includes:

- Assignments: To meet program and/or course objectives assignments were added to certain courses. (i.e. implementing an assignment with spreadsheets to meet a previous course learning outcome regarding understanding spreadsheet data entry).

AY20 Expedited Program Review Template

- Courses: Due to course deletion/change (I.e. To accommodate for the deletion of HUMS A101: Introduction to Human Services and HUMS: A122: Substance Abuse as a Contemporary Problem additional courses were added: HUMS A123- Community Education and Prevention in Substance Abuse and HUMS A155- Human Relations in the Workplace. Due to a limited course offering CIOS A135A: Spreadsheets I: MS Excel was deleted from the program).
- Program Learning Outcomes: To meet industry needs (I.e. Specifically outcome #4 that dealt with manipulating spreadsheets was deleted in combination with the deletion of that course, CIOS A135A. Outcome #5 focusing on oral and written communication was altered to focus on communication in relation to public service agencies. Outcome #9 regarding competitive entry skills was eliminated solely because it was difficult to assess in such a program through course completions (also many individual students who have completed the program have been employed within Corrections).

The Corrections program is well established. As intended the program is currently meeting strong community needs in the local area and across the State of Alaska. There have been a multitude of issues impacting program participation during the current 7 year look back. When the UEC began it was in large part due to the need to fill high demand vacancies throughout Alaska within the Department of Corrections. As part of that effort the department wanted to gain a more educated workforce leading to an increased ethical and professional workforce. This was indeed the conversations held with DOC leadership and the legislature that initially created the seed money for program start up (\$50,000).

When viewing enrollment between 2013-2015 there were a total of 16 individuals enrolled in the OEC. From 2016-2019, there was a downward trend of 11 individuals enrolled. Between 2013-2017 (no current data for 2018-2019), there was an average of 2 program graduates within the UEC. This was in large part the result of Alaska experiencing major challenges with Corrections. In 2016, the new administration's common theme presented in the media was the "system is broke." There were also a multitude of issues with inmate deaths and the lack of care purported in the media. Corrections in general was being attacked from every angle and suddenly what once was being viewed by students as a lucrative career, was now not so popular given the message being received by the public.

Recruitment:

In 2019, the new administration's focus has been one of public safety and as such DOC has seen an increase in support for filling and funding needed positions. In December, a story ran in the Channel 2 news "Alaska correctional officers union says system is in 'crisis' due to staffing shortages." The article spoke to how DOC is continuing to suffer regarding recruitment and retention. Like program enrollment, recruitment and retention issues were impacted by the negative media frenzy about the Alaska DOC. Commissioner Nancy Dahlstrom also stated in the article, "The department is planning a marketing program across the state and nation to find more officers, it is also planning to send representatives to jobs fairs and maintain a job recruitment website." In the governor's proposed budget for the next fiscal year, \$75,000 has been added to hire more correctional officers and \$62,000 had been added for additional medical screening for an anticipated rise in applicants. "I think we can meet our needs with that," Dahlstrom said.

Part of the recruitment priority has already begun and in January 2020 DOC announced \$5,000.00 recruitment bonuses for Correctional Officers newly hired. The current recruitment headings in NeoGov begin with:

Looking for a flexible schedule? Like your free time?

**The Department of Corrections, Division of Institutions, is recruiting for
Correctional Officer I positions in Anchorage Alaska.**

Anchorage Correctional Complex

****NOW OFFERING A \$5,000 HIRING BONUS****

SB 91 is shorthand for Senate Bill 91, a criminal justice reform bill signed into law by Gov. Bill Walker on July 11, 2016. As part of SB 91, a new division within the Alaska Department of Corrections was created in the form of the Pretrial Enforcement Division (PED). PED was implemented in the strategic plan for the Department of Corrections in July 2017. Under House Bill 49 (the new criminal justice legislation recently passed in 2019) Pretrial Enforcement was fully funded as well and continues in its current capacity. This will dramatically increase the availability of needed positions as an adult probation/parole officer and criminal justice technician. Kenai as an example currently has four new probation/parole officer positions and 1 CJT within their PED Office that prior to 2017 did not exist. In larger communities these numbers are much greater. It is anticipated that the creation of PED will have a direct positive correlation to program enrollment in the future.

Regarding program graduates it is important to note that although this number may appear lower compared to those enrolling, the UEC was created under the premise of seamless sharing with other programs. The thought was and still is, that possibly our program can act as a catalyst to other disciplines and may also pull from other disciplines as students already have many of the needed courses. An example is when criminal justice undergraduate students are obtaining bachelors at the main campus of UAA, they often have also fulfilled some of the credits needed for the Corrections UEC and obtain the certificate as well. Other examples are that many of the UEC graduates have gone on to complete the AAS in Human Services offered at KPC. This has been observed quite a bit by adjunct faculty in the program teaching the courses. Other factors that may influence completion involve obtaining employment prior to completion, transitioning to another major, and/or simply not completing due to life/work demands.

Program Successes: The real story...

Let me share some UEC success stories in the field. Please keep in mind that this is short snapshot only at our local level and many students have attended from throughout Alaska.

Student #1 began at KPC majoring in the UEC and later transitioned to the A.A.S. in Human Services. He completed both and while working at KPC he also worked as a community care counselor with those suffering with mental illness. Student #1 completed practicum at both the Adult Probation/Parole Office and at a Correctional Complex during his completion of his A.A.S. in Human Services. Upon graduation Student #1 was hired as a Correctional Officer I. Within the year following his completion of the CO academy, Student #1 was hired as an Adult Probation/Parole Officer I. Today Student #1 is still employed as an Adult Probation/Parole Officer II achieving outstanding results and has been an officer for approximately 6 years.

Student #2 enrolled and completed the UEC. In addition, he completed another associates program at KPC as well. Student #2 was hired within one year of completion of his UEC as a Correctional Officer (CO). Student #2 continues to be a positive and successful CO.

Student #3 has been employed with the Alaska Department of Corrections and is an Iraq war veteran. He has been a correctional officer, correctional sergeant, institutional probation/parole officer, and field probation/parole officer. Once back from the war with the Alaska National Guard, Student #3 felt like something was missing in his life as he lacked any higher education. Student #3 enrolled in the UEC and completed it successfully. Student #3 currently is an adult probation/parole officer.

Regarding cost, the UEC courses are monitored in regard to enrollment numbers to ensure costs are sufficiently covered. The UEC as mentioned, is taught by adjunct faculty within the e-learning environment and therefore has

little overhead associated with it. There is a small cost associated with advising that the college supports. However, the program costs are extremely minimal.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)

The UEC is currently the only one of its kind in the State of Alaska. When viewing offerings in the field of criminal justice both UAA and UAF offer criminal justice bachelor programs. UAS offers an undergraduate certificate specific to policing. KPC specifically is addressing the needs of the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) and recruitment efforts of underrepresented people. This is accomplished through program recruitment efforts at job fairs that reach out to the Russian Villages in Homer and Kenaitze locally and course offerings within the E-Learning environment where students from throughout the State of Alaska can attend regardless of location. The UEC is constantly changing to meet the current needs of DOC regarding objectives, course offerings, and focus.

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

The UEC program at KPC is making a difference in individual lives and continues to promote academic study beyond the UEC into other programs offered through UAA. The UEC supports the needs of industry specific to the Alaska Department of Corrections through creation of an educated and professional workforce. The UEC foundation was built upon conversations with leaders in DOC and the Alaska legislature. The cost of the program is extremely minimal as it is run by adjunct faculty with over 20 years in Corrections and Policing. In addition, the program cost shares with other programs throughout the UA system in that the OEC feeds other programs. Courses are monitored regarding enrollment numbers to ensure costs are covered. There is a small cost associated with advising that the college supports. Many of the courses taught would still likely be taught even if the program did not exist at KPC as students need many of the courses as part of other degree completions and/or GER's.

There have been various conversations around improvements to the OEC. Many of these improvements have been made to date involving program objectives and course/assignment changes. The OEC remains flexible to the needs of the Alaska DOC. As issues present themselves as improvement areas the program will need to remain ready for change to address those needs. Some examples presently on the table are courses geared around ethical decision making, risk/needs/and responsivity, and leadership. In the future the possibility exists to create an AAS in Corrections, if program enrollment increases as anticipated and the need exists with support from the university and the UAA Justice Department. Currently our goal remains the same, to continue to build dedicated professionals who are interested in a career in Corrections and promote our industry to all individuals to join our team!