



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs

Cc: Ron Everett, Committee Chair & Associate Professor of Justice
Troy Payne, Associate Professor of Justice
Ryan Fortson, Associate Professor of Justice

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Justice BA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): N/A

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role:

The Justice BA is an interdisciplinary program that prepares students for engaged citizenship; scholarship; justice careers in private and public organizations; and advanced studies in criminology, law, criminal justice, social research, and public administration. The Justice BA is unique because of its focus on addressing problems that lie at the nexus of public safety and public health. This dual focus on public safety and public health is essential to address Alaska's chronic social and behavioral health issues. Graduates of the Justice BA program are well prepared to make Alaska a safer, healthier, and more just society. The Justice Center has also been very successful in generating national and state support for its research activities. In particular, the Justice Center was successful in securing general funds (Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts [MHTAAR] and General Fund Mental Health [GF/MH] funds) to develop the Alaska Justice Information Center. The Justice Center's research activities provide students the opportunity to work on projects that have direct impacts on the public health and safety of people and communities in Alaska.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity:

The number of Justice BA graduates has remained relatively stable, averaging 38 graduates per year. However, the number of majors has precipitously declined, from a high of 288 in FY2013 to a low of 43 in FY2019 (-85%). This drop was due to the implementation of a pre-major and the development of the Legal Studies BA. In 2019, the Justice BA included 117 pre-majors and 43 majors, for a total of 160 students. When the Legal Studies BA was created, some students changed majors from Justice to Legal Studies. When this happened, faculty resources were shifted accordingly. As a result, the program maintains a healthy return on investment (it is important to note that part of the State's investment in the Justice Center is restricted funding dedicated to support the Alaska Justice Information Center). The program needs to pay attention to its course pass rates, especially in lower-division courses.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success:

The program recently proposed extensive curriculum changes, in response to evolving standards in criminal justice education and state needs. Students benefit from the program's strong connections to community and state partners for both research and internship opportunities. Students in the Justice BA have the option of applying knowledge and skills to address significant public health and safety issues. Students have presented research at local and national meetings. They have also co-authored reports and journal articles with faculty. Several courses include research and service learning activities. Faculty place an emphasis on the scholarship of teaching. They recently developed both online and master courses. Overall, the faculty maintain a strong focus on student success, particularly in research.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks also offers a BA in Justice. However, the UAA Justice BA is unique because of its broader focus on problems that lie at the nexus of public safety and public health (whereas the UAF Justice BA focuses more on public administration). The UAA Justice BA is also unique because of its exceptional performance in research and the opportunities that it provides for students. UAA faculty and students are actively engaged in the public policy making process in the state of Alaska.

Commendations and Recommendations:

The Justice BA makes an important contribution to the health and safety of people and communities in Alaska. Program graduates are ready to address some of our most difficult social and behavioral health issues. Program demand remains robust. When student interest shifted from Justice to Legal Studies, faculty resources were realigned. As a result, the program remained efficient. The program and its students benefit greatly from the Justice Center's success in securing research contracts. Part of the State's investment in the Justice Center is specifically dedicated for research. Overall, the Justice Center continues to provide an extremely valuable service to students and to the state of Alaska.

Decision:

Continuation.