

Assessment Cycle 2025 – 2026

Program: Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Criminal Justice (250)

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern State University Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The college strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The college provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the college houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the state's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs. The School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs at Northwestern State University is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, and research careers in the challenging fields of criminal justice, history, public safety, law, and public service. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service, the school produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and a driving force in the economic development and improvement of the overall quality of life in the region. The School delivers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Criminal Justice and History and Bachelor of Science degrees in Unified Public Safety Administration with concentrations in Law Enforcement Administration, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services Administration, Emergency Management Administration, and Public Facilities Management. Certificate programs in Pre-Law and Paralegal Studies and Public Policy and Administration are also available in addition to a Pre-law and Paralegal Studies concentration and minor. The School also delivers a Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and a Post-Master's certificate in Global Security and Intelligence.

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Criminal Justice Program Mission Statement: The mission of the Criminal Justice Program is to provide the perfect environment for the development of comprehensive knowledge and skills for students with a focus on our local, state, and national systems of justice. Our purpose is to challenge students to integrate critical thinking, decision-making skills, and acceptance of different cultures and peoples while seeking appropriate answers for criminal justice system issues within local, state, national, and global venues. This will be accomplished within an atmosphere that encourages a commitment to the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and values, both in the educational setting and the professional world. Within this foundation, the goal of the program is to educate criminal justice professionals to fit well into entry-level positions with the requisite skills and knowledge to move smoothly for advancement within their chosen professions.

Purpose: The bachelor program will teach the requisite knowledge and skills for committed students to succeed in criminal justice careers. This program prepares students for entry positions in law enforcement, corrections, probation and parole, and other legal concentrations. The program will focus on a comprehensive understanding of the field of criminal justice and the role of each graduate's position of authority, persuasion, and influence within it. It will also prepare interested students for the pursuit of further advanced degrees in Homeland Security, Political Science, Strategic Leadership, International Relations, and Law at other institutions.

Methodology: The assessment process for the BA in criminal justice program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct or indirect, quantitative or qualitative) are collected and returned to the Program Coordinator.
- (2) The Program Coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses if required.
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Criminal Justice Advisory Council, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period, and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. First, second, and third-semester students will be able to describe the historical evolution and context of early American criminal justice (CJ), policing and court process developments and challenges, and the status of these systems within local, state, and federal government, including 21st-century challenges within the international and global communities.

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Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

CJ 1100: Introduction to Criminal Justice

CJ 2300: Police Process

CJ 2400: Adjudication Process

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Knowledge):

On an annual basis, students enrolled in CJ 1100, CJ 2300, and CJ 2400 (all required courses for the CJ bachelor (BA) degree), will be administered course exams containing a module of questions taken from a bank developed by faculty responsible for each course. These question banks are created and revised based on criteria developed by the Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJA Council) and are designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of criminal justice, policing, and courts from early America through current international and globalization challenges. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding and comprehension of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with 87.25% of students scoring 70% or higher on their exams. This target was consistently met for several cycles.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Instead of arbitrarily raising the target, it remained at 80% for AC 2025-2026. Faculty enhanced communication practices around pedagogy as detailed in the previous cycle. These assignments emphasized practical application and structured support to improve engagement and comprehension. As some of these courses are online second-year courses, some students are still developing consistent study habits. Faculty implemented more scenario-based learning, including case studies, real-world examples, and body-camera video analysis.

As a result of these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Ninety percent (90%) of students scored 70% or higher on their exams across these courses. These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to retain and apply the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of criminal justice. The pedagogical improvements proved especially effective in helping students apply criminal justice concepts such as ethics, use of force, and legal decision-making.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of 2025-2026 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will focus on increasing deeper learning through more structured review activities and expanded use of scenario-based learning. Contemporary case studies, simulations, video analysis, and group problem-solving will be incorporated

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with greater emphasis on critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the application of criminal justice concepts to contemporary issues. The integration of experiential learning assignments will improve the students' foundational knowledge and efficacy in their future career path.

Measure 1.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

Students will demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills through a course project/writing requirement in which they are required to research and submit a written research project for each course. This research project is responsive to the research project requirements developed by the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of criminal justice, policing, or courts, and meet the requirements set for the research project. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with 82.5% of enrolled students demonstrating an understanding of the subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project. This target was met for several cycles.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, as well as those of AC 2023-2024, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2024-2025 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Criminal Justice Coordinator met with the faculty to discuss the implementation of specific experiential learning assignments and class improvements to drive student understanding and performance of this SLO. CJ 1100 incorporated multiple forensic case studies to drive student engagement. In CJ 2400, students were required to be courtroom observers and detail the experience as part of foundational assignments in this course.

As a result of the changes, in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with 81% of enrolled students demonstrating an understanding of the subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project. Although this represents a decrease from last cycle, many students showed growth in analyzing complex policing decisions and recognized the importance of context, legal standards, and ethics in decision-making. Experiential learning opportunities, including real-world examples and courtroom observations, further deepened understanding by helping students see how the justice system operates in practice, often reshaping prior perceptions and increasing overall engagement.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met when 81% of enrolled students demonstrated an understanding of the subject matter. This target has been met for the last several cycles. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement in AC 2026-2027. Faculty will implement additional low-stakes quizzes, interactive review sessions, and polling activities to reinforce key concepts. Faculty will focus on increasing preparation assignments, and incremental checkpoints for the semester project. Given

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the success of the coordinator and faculty meetings, we will enhance this practice in the upcoming cycle. These changes will improve the faculty's ability to assess the students' final projects. The integration of checkpoint learning assignments will improve the students' ability to plan ahead and manage their workload while building foundational knowledge.

SLO 2. Fourth, fifth, and sixth-semester students will know and understand the philosophies and sciences of the CJ system as well as the structures, roles, and functions of the various organizations and agencies comprising the criminal justice system. This includes law enforcement, corrections, and courts, the processes and challenges involved in each, and the inter-component relationships, checks and balances, constitutional issues, and problems and ethical challenges associated with navigating the agencies within this system.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

CJ 2500: Corrections Process

CJ 2600: Introduction to Criminalistics and Forensics

CJ 3040: Criminology, Foundations, and Punishments

CJ 3090: Juvenile Delinquency and Justice

CJ 3355: Cultural Competence for Criminal Justice Professionals

CJ 3360: Criminal Investigation

CJ 3380: Criminal Justice Ethics

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge):

On an annual basis, students enrolled in CJ 2500, CJ 3040, CJ 3090, CJ 3355, CJ 3360, and CJ 3380 (all required courses for the CJ BA degree) will be administered course exams containing a module of questions taken from a bank developed by the faculty responsible for each course. These question banks are created using criteria developed by the CJA Council and are designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the scientific study of criminal behavior and crime theories, strategies, foundations and punishment, the ethics and moral philosophy of criminal justice, and the processes of criminal investigations. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding and comprehension of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with 88% of students demonstrated understanding and comprehension of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams. This target was met in the previous cycle as well.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Criminal Justice Coordinator met with faculty to discuss implementation of experiential-learning

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assignments, based on contemporary cases, offering the student the opportunity to gain experience in sentencing determination, criminogenic variables, investigative procedures, as well as ethical and cultural variables intrinsic to the Criminal Justice system.

As a result of these changes, the target was met with 85% of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met with 85% of enrolled students were able to demonstrate an understanding of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will implement more structured guidance for major assignments along with incremental checkpoints and additional formative assessments to help students manage coursework and improve performance. There will also be a stronger emphasis on developing written communication and analytical skills through low-stakes writing exercises. Additionally, restructuring certain courses into more focused, level-appropriate sequences will allow for deeper content coverage and a clearer progression of learning outcomes.

Measure 2.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

Students will demonstrate proficient written and oral research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through a research project/writing requirement in which they are required to research and submit a written research project and/or presentation for each course. This project is responsive to the course semester project requirements developed by the faculty responsible for each course. It will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the corrections process, crime and punishment, juvenile delinquency and criminal justice, criminal investigation processes, or ethics in criminal justice. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-one percent (91%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on the semester projects. This target was also met in the previous cycle. Changes in 2024-2025 were related to providing more lectures and class materials related to APA style guidelines and research procedures.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty enhanced the offerings related to digital literacy, style guides, and research procedures. A new digital literacy module was tested in CJ 2400, CJ 2500, CJ 3380, and CJ 4250. Faculty integrated experiential learning assignments, improving the students' foundational knowledge and preparing them to apply the knowledge in the final project and beyond.

As a result of the changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with 88% of enrolled students

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demonstrated an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on that semester project.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Building upon the already successful numbers, faculty will focus on breaking the project into smaller, scaffolded components with regular checkpoints, helping students manage the workload, reduce last-minute submissions, and build confidence in the research and writing process. Increased integration of project-related discussions, and instructor feedback will enhance engagement, while incorporating real-world forensic and criminal justice examples will help students better connect course concepts to their research and deepen critical thinking.

SLO 3. Sixth, seventh, and eighth-semester students will demonstrate that they understand the history, philosophy, theories, and evolution inherent to the study of

- (1) Community-based Corrections**
- (2) Drug Use in Modern Society**
- (3) The Purposes and Functions of Laws**
- (4) The Foundations, Limits, and Constitutional Considerations Affecting Criminal Evidence and Procedure during Criminal Processes**
- (5) The Court Decisions Interpreting Individual Rights in relation to Criminal Process**
- (6) Homeland Security**
- (7) The Imperatives of Race and Cultural Relations in Criminal Justice**

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

CJ 4250: Community-Based Corrections

CJ 4450: Criminal Law

CJ 4460: Criminal Evidence and Procedure

CJ 4475: Homeland Security

CJ 4500: Drug Use in Modern Society

PSCI 3090: Constitutional Law

SOC 4080: Race and Cultural Relations for Pure and Applied Sociology

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge / Attitude):

On an annual basis, students enrolled in CJ 4250, CJ 4450, CJ 4460, CJ 4475, CJ 4500, PSCI 3090, and SOC 4080 (all required courses for the CJ BA degree) will be administered course exams containing a module of questions taken from a bank developed by the faculty responsible for each course. These question banks are created using criteria developed by the CJA Council and are designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the history, foundations, evolution, and purposes of community-based corrections, criminal law, criminal evidence and procedure, Constitutional decisions expanding and limiting criminal process, and drug use in modern society. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to

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demonstrate an understanding and comprehension of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-two percent (92%) of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or better on the exams in the various classes. This target was met in the previous cycle as well. The faculty incorporated various media to aid in the comprehension and appreciation of the subject matter in classes. The faculty enhanced video content related to theory and its application to criminal justice, enhancing the students' ability to synthesize and absorb the information.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Criminal Justice Coordinator met with faculty to discuss implementation of experiential learning assignments. Through this experiential engagement, students will improve their ability to apply their knowledge of criminal justice in designing a pre-sentence investigation, analyzing criminal evidence and process, and relating that information to knowledge of criminogenic variables as discussed in upper-division courses.

As a result of the changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with ninety-five percent (89%) of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or better on the exams in the various classes. While this does represent a decrease from last cycle, this is still well above the stated target. Faculty members saw an increase in academic dishonesty in upper-level courses, specifically AI usage. However, the previous cycle's changes have had substantial, and positive, impact on the students' ability to identify criminogenic variables across upper-division coursework.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will focus on increasing student engagement and authentic learning, while addressing challenges related to AI misuse. Greater emphasis will be placed on interactive, application-based activities such as Socratic seminars, in-class exercises, and assignments that encourage active involvement and critical thinking. Courses will incorporate more real-world connections through current events and practical legal or social issues to deepen relevance and interest. Assignments will increasingly emphasize personal reflection and individualized responses to promote authentic work and reduce reliance on AI tools.

Measure 3.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

Students will demonstrate proficient written and oral research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through a research project/writing requirement in which they are required to research and submit a written research project and/or presentation for the course. This project is responsive to the course semester project requirements developed by the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of the foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of

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community-based corrections, criminal law, criminal evidence and procedure, race and cultural relations, and the Constitution and court decisions. The target is that eighty percent (80%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (75%) or higher on the semester project.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-five percent (95%) of the students scoring seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on this measure. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met with eighty-six percent (86%) of the students scoring seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on this measure. In AC 2022-2023, the target was met, with eighty-seven percent (87%) of the students scoring seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on this measure. This measurement has been consistently met for multiple consecutive cycles.

This cycle, the measure changed to eighty percent (80%) of enrolled students being able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on the semester project.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026. Faculty focused on strengthening alignment between learning objectives, instruction, and student outcomes through more intentional and applied teaching strategies. The use of real-world, scenario-based learning was expanded in both frequency and complexity, helping students better connect theory to practice and improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As a result of the changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with eighty-five percent (85%) of the students scoring seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on this measure.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement in AC 2026-2027. Faculty will make efforts to boost participation and accountability through methods such as combining written and oral components. Additionally, faculty will work to enhance engagement through real-world connections, case studies, and opportunities for interaction and feedback.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate appropriate research skills and strategies and appropriate written and verbal communication skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

CJ 4200: Introduction to Criminal Justice Research

Measure 4.1. (Direct-Skill/Ability/Knowledge):

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Students will demonstrate proficient written research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through a research project/writing requirement in which they are required to research and submit a written research project and presentation for this course. This project is responsive to the course semester project requirements developed by the faculty responsible for the course and will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of some aspects of foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the corrections process, crime and punishment, juvenile delinquency and criminal justice, criminal investigation processes, criminal courts and law, criminal process, race and cultural relations, Homeland Security, or ethics in criminal justice. Several components will measure written communication skills on a scale from low proficiency to high proficiency. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project and will demonstrate proficient research skills and strategies and writing skills. Proficiency will be demonstrated by a combined score of at least seventy-five percent (75%) or higher on the course rubric for the written requirements for the research project.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with 86% of the students receiving a score of 75% or higher on the course rubric. Prior to this cycle, the measure was not met in the previous two cycles.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026. Faculty implemented regular individual check-ins throughout the semester to address questions and provide guidance as the students worked through the project. The faculty provided an enhanced and detailed outline of the expected structure and components of the proposal, which offered clearer direction and reduced confusion. Additionally, the faculty member reintroduced the methodology-focused discussion board so that students could receive both peer-to-peer feedback and guidance as they developed their research proposals.

As a result of the changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with 83% of the students receiving a score of 75% or higher on the rubric. Many struggled with the literature review because they had difficulty synthesizing research studies and organizing scholarly findings into a cohesive academic discussion.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of AC 2025-2026, the faculty will implement the following changes to drive improvement in AC 2026-2027. Faculty will create smaller, scaffolded assignments. These assignments will be introduced earlier in the semester. Professor will incorporate additional assignments, examples, and guided practice activities focused specifically on literature review writing to help students build those skills more gradually.

Measure 4.2. (Direct – knowledge):

On an annual basis, students enrolled in CJ 4200 (a required course for the CJ degree) will be administered course exams containing a module of questions taken from a bank developed by the faculty responsible for the course. These question banks are created

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and revised based on criteria developed by the CJA Council. They are designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of research strategies, data collection techniques, and other analytical tools for research in criminology and criminal justice research. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding and comprehension of the course subject matter by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-six percent (96%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams. This target was also met consecutively in previous cycles.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026. The faculty incorporated recorded lectures to help students better understand key concepts and reinforce the material covered in the textbook. The faculty also adopted a more user-friendly textbook to make the content more accessible and enhance overall comprehension.

As a result of the changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with ninety-one percent (91%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on each of the exams.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 assessment results, the faculty will implement the following changes to drive the cycle of improvement in AC 2026-2027. The faculty plans to incorporate recorded lectures based on experiential learning case studies. This has previously proved to be successful in other SLOs and measures.

SLO 5. Students will demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and comprehension of criminal justice systems and be able to communicate that proficiency in written and oral form.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus objectives.

CJ 4480: **Senior Seminar in Criminal Justice.**

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge/Skill/Ability):

In the eighth/final semester of this program, students enrolled in CJ 4480 (a required course for the CJ BA degree) will demonstrate a proficient understanding of written research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through a research project/written/presentation requirement. The students are required to continue their research which began in CJ 4200. The students are then required to submit their written research project with a final presentation at the conclusion of the semester. This requirement will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of some aspects of foundational concepts, theories, strategies, and challenges of the corrections process, crime and punishment, juvenile delinquency, criminal investigation processes, criminal

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courts and law, criminal process, race and cultural relations, Homeland Security, or ethics in criminal justice. Several components will measure both written and oral communication skills on a scale from low proficiency to high proficiency. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project. Students will demonstrate proficient research skills and strategies needed for graduate school and career development. Proficiency will be demonstrated by a combined score of at least seventy percent (70%) or higher on the presentation.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-six percent (86%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this assignment. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met with eighty-six percent (86%) of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure. In AC 2022-2023, the target was also met, with eighty-four percent (84%) of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure.

Based on the analysis of AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty required the students to complete reverse outlines of various sections of their proposals throughout the semester. The goal of this assignment is to help students identify weaknesses in their research design and structure. This reflective approach would not only improve the quality of their final proposals but also enhance their critical thinking and editing skills. Students should be able to effectively articulate the purpose of their research proposals, summarize the existing literature related to their topics, and demonstrate an understanding of appropriate methodological approaches. Faculty also implemented more peer-to-peer learning opportunities to encourage greater engagement with the material.

As a result of these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with eighty-six percent (86%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure.

Decision: In AC 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The primary faculty member for this course will shift starting during the Fall 2026 semester. Faculty will integrate more experiential learning targeting research skills in contemporary investigations, cultural competence, and career readiness.

Measure 5.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

In the eighth/final semester of this program, CJ 4480 (a capstone required course for the CJ BA degree) provides students the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have acquired in this major to work-world situations and integrate all academic criminal justice learning, knowledge, and skills to prepare students for transference to the world of work. Students will demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills through a course in which they are required to research and submit a written research project on the subject matter directly related to their target career.

This writing requirement is responsive to the course semester project requirements

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developed by the faculty responsible for this course and will evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of criminal justice systems and the role of the matriculating students within them as well as measure written communication skills. The target is that seventy-five percent (75%) of enrolled students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of the project by scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on the semester project.

Findings: The target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met with ninety-six percent (96%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure. In AC 2023-2024, the target was met, with ninety-four percent (94%) of students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty redesigned this course to be taught by a single faculty member, enabling individualized feedback with a single point of contact. The faculty also implemented more peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

As a result of these changes in AC 2025-2026, the target was met with seventy-seven percent (77%) of the students scoring seventy percent (70%) or higher on this measure.

Decision: In 2025-2026, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2025-2026 results, the faculty will implement the following change in AC 2026-2027 to drive the cycle of improvement. The primary faculty member for this course will change starting during the Fall 2026 semester. Faculty will integrate more experiential learning targeting research skills in contemporary investigations, cultural competence, and career readiness. The semester project will shift to focus on these specific areas.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement Based on Analysis of Results.

The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2025-2026. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the AC 2024-2025 results analysis.

- In Measure 1.1, faculty enhanced communication practices around pedagogy, detailed in the previous cycle. Faculty discussed implementation of specific experiential-learning assignments that can be used across all measures.
- In Measure 1.2, the Criminal Justice Coordinator met with the faculty to discuss the implementation of specific experiential learning assignments and class improvements to drive student understanding and performance of this SLO. CJ 1100 incorporated multiple forensic case studies to drive student engagement. In CJ 2400, students were required to be courtroom observers and detail the

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experience as part of foundational assignments in this course.

- In Measure 2.1, the Criminal Justice Coordinator met with faculty to discuss implementation of experiential-learning assignments, based on contemporary cases, offering the student the opportunity to gain experience in sentencing determination, criminogenic variables, investigative procedures, as well as ethical and cultural variables intrinsic to the Criminal Justice system.
- In Measure 2.2, faculty enhanced the offerings related to digital literacy, style guides, and research procedures. A new digital literacy module was tested in CJ 2400, CJ 2500, CJ 3380, and CJ 4250. Faculty continued the integration of experiential learning assignments, improving the students' foundational knowledge and preparing them to apply the knowledge in the final project and beyond.
- In Measure 3.1, the Criminal Justice Coordinator met with faculty to discuss implementation of experiential learning assignments. Through this experiential engagement, students will improve their ability to apply their knowledge of criminal justice in designing a pre-sentence investigation, analyzing criminal evidence and process, and relating that information to knowledge of criminogenic variables as discussed in upper-division courses.
- In Measure 3.2, faculty focused on strengthening alignment between learning objectives, instruction, and student outcomes through more intentional and applied teaching strategies. The use of real-world, scenario-based learning was expanded in both frequency and complexity, helping students better connect theory to practice and improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- In Measure 4.1, faculty implemented regular individual check-ins throughout the semester to address questions and provide guidance as they work through the project. The faculty provided an enhanced and detailed outline of the expected structure and components of the proposal, which offered clearer direction and reduced confusion. Additionally, the faculty member reintroduced the methodology-focused discussion board so that students can receive both peer-to-peer feedback and guidance as they develop their research proposals.
- In Measure 4.2, the faculty incorporated recorded lectures to help students better understand key concepts and reinforce the material covered in the textbook. The faculty also adopted a more user-friendly textbook, which will make the content more accessible and enhance overall comprehension.
- In Measure 5.1, the faculty required the students to complete reverse outlines of various sections of their proposals throughout the semester. The goal of this assignment is to help students identify weaknesses in their research design and structure. This reflective approach will not only improve the quality of their final proposals but also enhance their critical thinking and editing skills. Students will be able to effectively articulate the purpose of their research proposals, summarize the existing literature related to their topics, and demonstrate an understanding of appropriate methodological approaches. Faculty also implemented more peer-to-

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peer learning opportunities to encourage greater engagement with the material.

- In Measure 5.2, the faculty redesigned this course to be taught by a single faculty member, enabling individualized feedback with a single point of contact. The faculty also implemented more peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Plan of Action Moving Forward:

- In Measure 1.1, faculty will focus on increasing deeper learning through more structured review activities and expanded use of scenario-based learning. Contemporary Case studies, simulations, video analysis, and group problem-solving will be incorporated with greater emphasis on critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the application of criminal justice concepts to contemporary issues. The integration of experiential learning assignments will improve the students' foundational knowledge and efficacy in their future career path.
- In Measure 1.2, faculty will implement additional low-stakes quizzes, interactive review sessions, and polling activities to reinforce key concepts. Faculty will focus on increasing preparation assignments, and incremental checkpoints for the semester project. Given the success of the coordinator and faculty meetings, we will enhance this practice in the upcoming cycle. These changes will improve the department's ability to assess the students' final project. The integration of checkpoint learning assignments will improve the students' ability to plan ahead and manage their workload while building foundational knowledge.
- In Measure 2.1, faculty will implement more structured guidance for major assignments, along with incremental checkpoints and additional formative assessments to help students manage coursework and improve performance. There will also be a stronger emphasis on developing written communication and analytical skills through low-stakes writing exercises. Additionally, restructuring certain courses into more focused, level-appropriate sequences will allow for deeper content coverage and a clearer progression of learning outcomes.
- In Measure 2.2, faculty will focus on breaking the project into smaller, scaffolded components with regular checkpoints, helping students manage the workload, reduce last-minute submissions, and build confidence in the research and writing process. Increased integration of project-related discussions, and instructor feedback will enhance engagement, while incorporating real-world forensic and criminal justice examples will help students better connect course concepts to their research and deepen critical thinking.
- In Measure 3.1, faculty will focus on increasing student engagement and authentic learning, while addressing challenges related to AI misuse. Greater emphasis will be placed on interactive, application-based activities such as Socratic seminars, in-class exercises, and assignments that encourage active involvement and critical thinking. Courses will incorporate more real-world connections through current events and practical legal or social issues to deepen relevance and interest.

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Assignments will increasingly emphasize personal reflection and individualized responses to promote authentic work and reduce reliance on AI tools.

- In Measure 3.2, faculty will make efforts to boost participation and accountability through methods such as combining written and oral components. Additionally, faculty will work to enhance engagement through real-world connections, case studies, and opportunities for interaction and feedback.
- In Measure 4.1, faculty will create smaller, scaffolded assignments. These assignments will be introduced earlier in the semester. Professor will incorporate additional assignments, examples, and guided practice activities focused specifically on literature review writing to help students build those skills more gradually.
- In Measure 4.2, the faculty plans to incorporate recorded lectures, based on experiential learning case studies. This has previously proven to be successful in other SLOs and measures.
- In Measure 5.1, the primary faculty member for this course will change starting in the Fall 2026 semester. Faculty will integrate more experiential learning targeting research skills in contemporary investigations, cultural competence, and career readiness.
- In Measure 5.2, the primary faculty member for this course will change starting in the Fall 2026 semester. Faculty will integrate more experiential learning targeting research skills in contemporary investigations, cultural competence, and career readiness. The semester project will shift to focus on these specific areas.