



## Criminal Justice [MS] [CJSO]

### **Cycles included in this report:**

Jun 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021

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## **Program Name: Criminal Justice [MS] [CJSO]**

**Reporting Cycle: Jun 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021**

### **1 Is this program offered via Distance Learning?**

100% Distance only

### **2 Is this program offered at an off-site location?**

No

### **2.1 If yes to previous, provide addresses for each location where 50% or more of program credits may be earned.**

### **3 Example of Program Improvement**

2016-2017:

Although the M.S. in CJUS program at McNeese is relatively new (established in the fall 2013 semester), we now have in excess of 30 graduate students in our program. In particular, during the spring 2017 semester, our Department of Social Sciences had nine students graduating with their M.S. in CJUS. It is anticipated that our M.S. in CJUS program at McNeese State University will continue to prosper and flourish in the years to come.

2017-2018:

Since the establishment of our M.S. in CJUS program in the fall 2013 semester, there has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in our program. An examination of the historical data reveal the following enrollment numbers for our CJUS M.S. program:

Spring 2014 - 9 students

Spring 2015 - 18 students

Spring 2016 - 26 students

Spring 2017 - 41 students

Spring 2018 - 51 students

Fall 2018 - 61 students

Dr. Clark and Dr. Thompson have recognized the intellectual growth of their students, both in terms of their critical thinking skills and in their ability to follow the appropriate APA guidelines in referencing sources within their given assignment. Indeed, an examination of objective scoring data from assessments reported in this document indicate the ability of the students to integrate knowledge in a wise, fruitful, and productive way. Furthermore, those students who have struggled in those aforementioned areas are encouraged to seek assistance from the Writing Center, or from the professor teaching the particular class.

In addition, students are enjoying their journey through our program. Some of the end-of-course sentiments include:

- "Outstanding instructor. Really enjoyed this class overall. He is very detailed when giving feedback on the work that was presented to him. He is highly recommended to be taken over again"
- "Is a great instructor. His courses are always very challenging and I learned a lot"
- "The professor & class were absolutely wonderful! I learned way more than I could have imagined!!!"

As the program continues to develop and grow, we anticipate that improvements will be made which will continue to keep our program on the cutting edge of developing sound, intellectually-gifted, and productive graduates who have the ability to provide professional services to our criminal justice system in large.

2018-2019:

A new professor was hired, Dr. Verrill. Dr. Verrill has an extensive history in research and publications. He is expected to add to the quality of the program and diversity in additional expertise. He is actively seeking roles with the local community. Dr. Thompson is making more

community partnerships including international efforts to fight human trafficking. The students are making an impact in the community including promotions in local law enforcement agencies. We will continue to recruit and graduate students in the program to increase the effectiveness and efficiency in the MSCJ program.

2019-2020:

We have improved the quality of our M.S. in CJUS program by adding Dr. Steve Verrill to our CJUS graduate faculty. During the present reporting period, Dr. Verrill has shown his teaching versatility by teaching four of the five required graduate level courses. It is important to note that this flexibility was important for our program because there were College of Liberal Art cutbacks that occurred in the area of adjunct professors for our graduate program. Fortunately, we were able to add Dr. Jenny Creel as an adjunct professor during the Fall 2020 term to help teach some of the courses that we need to offer to our graduate students.

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, an example of program improvement involved an assessment of our scheduling of classes. This program enhancement was driven by the recognition that many students enrolled in our program are not able to graduate because the class or classes that they need are not being offered in their last semester. When a situation like this occurs, a graduate level class may be offered to those students who are facing the dilemma of not having a class or classes to take to graduate. It is our desire that with the proper scheduling of classes that fewer students will be faced with dealing with the lack of classes to take to graduate.

#### **4 Program Highlights from the Reporting Year**

2016-2017:

According to the exit survey, students are happy with their experiences in the program and feel confident in their ability to apply what they learned in a future career.

2017-2018:

One significant highlight from this reporting year is that we hired Ms. April Ben, a fall 2017 M.S. in CJUS graduate, as an adjunct professor to teach CJUS 241 (U.S. Corrections). In addition, our program enrollment numbers continue to rise, moving from 50 enrolled students during the fall 2017 semester to 61 enrolled students during the fall 2018 semester. Furthermore, in terms of graduate online program enrollment at McNeese State University, the CJUS M.S. program is the second largest (61 students) next to the MSN program in Nursing (147 students). From examining the historical data associated with our M.S. in CJUS program, the future student enrollment numbers for our program should continue to rise. We eagerly look forward to expanding our resources to meet the need of this growing student interest in pursuing the M.S. in CJUS degree from McNeese State University.

2018-2019:

We continue to graduate more students. They are serving in leadership positions in Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office, Office of Juvenile Justice Services, and Lake Charles Police Department, etc. Some of our graduates have been awarded teaching positions at other institutions of higher learning.

2019-2020:

An assessment of our graduate program from the Fall 2013 semester to present time reveals that 89 students have graduated with their M.S. in CJUS degree. We currently have 65 students enrolled in our program and should be close to reaching the 100 graduate level by the MSU Fall graduation date in December 2020. As our M.S. in CJUS program flourishes, we will continue to be on the cutting edge of best practices when it comes to delivering our online classes to our graduate students. In short, we anticipate a continued growth of our program in terms of student enrollment, and in the area of faculty support services.

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, there were 29 individuals that graduated from our M.S. in CJUS degree program (16 students during the Fall 2020 semester; 13 students during the Spring 2021 semester). At the beginning of the Spring 2021 term, 49 individuals were enrolled in the M.S.

in CJUS degree program. When you compare the student enrollment numbers to the enrollment numbers of previous reporting periods, it appears that there has been a decrease in the number of enrolled students. This said decrease in the enrollment numbers may be related to a number of factors, such as: the pandemic and the destruction from Hurricanes Laura and Delta.

## 5 Program Mission

The mission of the Master of Science in Criminal Justice online program is to provide advanced study in a range of fields associated with criminal justice including but not limited to corrections; terrorism, preparedness, and security; and justice administration (policy and legal aspects). Students engage in research and theory appropriate to their area of concentration.

## 6 Institutional Mission Reference

The Master of Science in Criminal Justice provides a foundation for practitioners. The program provides students with the ability to analyze the literature and make sound evidence-based decisions.

## 7 Assessment and Benchmark CJUS 601 Pre-Test/Post-Test [Not Approved]

Assessment: CJUS 601 pre-test and post-test.

Benchmark: 84% of students will earn a score of 80% or higher on the post-test.

### Outcome Links

#### Research [Program]

Students will learn methodology to conduct research in the field of criminal justice.

### 7.1 Data

Term	# of students completing pre- and post-test	Students meeting benchmark		Average scores		% change from pre- to post-test
		#	%	Pre-test	Post-test	
Fall 2020	9	4	44.4%	4.77	6.11	28.1%

#### 7.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, Dr. Steve Verrill taught CJUS 601 (Fall 2020). Dr. Verrill adopted a new assessment for CJUS 601. This new assessment was based on a pre-test/post-test design that included 10 questions. The post-test benchmark score distribution target was set at 84%. An analysis of the data reveals that the actual post-test score distribution (44%) was below the target post-test mark of 84%.

Based upon the findings of the pre-test/post-test design, the plan for continuous improvement will center on weekly reflection essays over the assigned reading material.

## 8 Assessment and Benchmark CJUS 602 Late Term Writing Assignment

Assessment: CJUS 602 Late Term Writing Assignment.

Benchmark: 80% of students will earn a score of 85% on the CJUS 602 writing assignment.

*Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).*

CJUS-602-7WA\_F2020\_WA2 Fall 2020

CJUS-602-7WB\_S2021\_WA4 Spring 2021

### Outcome Links

#### Justice Administration [Program]

Students will demonstrate a thorough understanding and application of justice administration.

### 8.1 Data

Academic Year	Students that received an A	Students that received a B

	#	%	#	%
2017-2018	6/12	50%	6/12	50%
2018-2019	11/38	29%	24/38	63%
2019-2020	—	—	—	—

Term	Students scoring 85% or higher	
	#	%
Fall 2020	23/29	79%
Spring 2021	10/15	67%

### 8.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

This is a new assessment that will be implemented in the future to evaluate students' ability to write.

2017-2018:

During the spring 2018 semester, one section of CJUS 602 was taught by Dr. Jenny Creel. Based upon an examination of the data associated with the late term writing assignment, it appears that 50% of the students (six individuals) received a grade of A on this aforementioned assignment, while 50% of the students (six students) received a grade of B on the same required assignment. Given Dr. Creel's commentary in the attached assessment file, it appears that the most problematic aspect for the students on this writing assignment was the mechanical (i.e., grammar and usage) part. In this particular vein, several students had issues with misspelled words and sentence structure. After considering the results of this assignment, a concerted effort will be made to educate future students as to the importance of the mechanical aspects of the written word. In this particular vein, the present grading rubric will be used again to analyze if there is an improvement in students' grades with respect to grammar, usage, and sentence structure.

2018-2019:

Utilizing the grading rubric from the previous year 2017-2018 for data year 2018-2019, students demonstrated improvement relative to their writing mechanics with respect to grammar, usage, and sentence structure. However, another weakness was identified relative to proper APA usage. In this particular vein, a number of students lack the basic understanding of APA formatting and referencing relative to formal writing assignments. The plan for continuous improvement in writing assignments will include the reinforcement of proper APA usage and understanding of peer-reviewed documents by providing students with a sample paper. A decision to provide students with access to a current APA Manual will reinforce the proper use APA format and references. Future assessment of writing assignments will include the basic understanding and usage of APA format and references.

2019-2020:

During the current reporting period, Dr. Verrill taught one section of CJUS 602 (Fall 2019). Given the fact that Dr. Verrill was hired before the start of the Fall 2019 semester, he was not aware of the previous assessment that was used by Dr. Jenny Creel. With that being said, Dr. Verrill has requested permission to establish his own assignment for assessment purposes for future program reporting periods. In short, it is anticipated that Dr. Verrill will fulfill the goal of establishing an assignment for CJUS 602 that will align with assessing the critical thinking skills of those graduate students that are enrolled in CJUS 602.

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, two sections of CJUS 602 were taught (Fall 2020 & Spring 2021). In each of these sections, writing assignments were assessed (please see the attachments). The benchmark established for this new assessment was as follows: 80% of the students completing this writing assignment will achieve an 85 or better relative to proper

presentation format and understanding of the topic. An analysis of the data reveals the following:

Fall 2020: 23/29 students (79%) completing the assignment met the benchmark. The percent is a bit short of the level established for this assignment. After analyzing and assessing the assignment responses, many of them were weak relative to presentation format required for the course assignment. The student strengths related to topic understanding.

Spring 2021: 10/15 students (67%) completing the assignment met the benchmark. Given the aforementioned results, the students failed to meet the benchmark set for this assignment. After analyzing and assessing the assignment responses, it was found that many students were weak relative to presentation format required for this particular assignment. The student strengths were found to be understanding of the topic.

The plan for continuous improvement will be focused on giving students access to proper APA formats and writing mechanics.

*Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).*

CJUS-602-7WA\_F2020\_WA2 Fall 2020

CJUS-602-7WB\_S2021\_WA4 Spring 2021

## 9 Assessment and Benchmark CJUS 603 Correctional Justice Administration Assignment

Assessment: CJUS 603 Correctional Justice Administration Assignment.

Benchmark: 90% of students will meet or exceed a minimum score of 80% on the correctional justice administration assignment.

*Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).*

final cjus 603 2021 new

### Outcome Links

#### Justice Administration [Program]

Students will demonstrate a thorough understanding and application of justice administration.

### 9.1 Data

2016-2017:

New assessment data will be reported in future reports.

2017-2018:

CJUS 603 is a correctional administration course, not a criminological theory class. Therefore, a new assessment will be developed which deals in particular with the concerns related to correctional administrative matters. Likewise, the assessment of the criminological theory assignment will be placed within the confines of the CJUS 605 course, not the CJUS 603 class.

Academic Year	Students scoring 80% or higher	
	#	%
2018-2019	22/25	88%
2019-2020	18/21	86%
2020-2021	21/21	100%

#### 9.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Based upon the analysis of the data collected for the last three years, we will begin to provide an analysis in future reports on the students' strengths and weaknesses on this assignment. A rubric will be developed to help us assess where improvements can be made in this student learning outcome.

2017-2018:

Dr. Latricia Kyle taught two sections of CJUS 603 during the fall 2017 semester. Unfortunately, Dr. Kyle is no longer employed by McNeese State University. Given the departure of Dr. Kyle from McNeese State University, it is unknown if she utilized any rubric for the assessment of the criminological theory assignment. On a side note, this assessment should have been associated with assessing the knowledge of students as it relates to correctional matters, not criminological theory. With that being said, an effort will be made to incorporate an assessment on future M.S. in CJUS academic plans which deal specifically with assessing the critical thinking skills of students as it relates to criminological theory. This assessment should have been incorporated within the CJUS 605 Criminological Theory class, not the CJUS 603 Correctional Administration course. Finally, on future academic plans, a new correctional administration assessment item will be developed for the CJUS 603 class.

2018-2019:

During the reporting period of 2018-2019, Dr. Clark taught two sections of CJUS 603 (Fall 2018). Based upon the reported data, the benchmark for CJUS 603 was not met. As we reflect upon the results of the correctional administration assignment, it appears that some students need to do a better job of specifically defining the key components within their given responses. Likewise, some students fell short of considering the implications and assumptions associated with the questions on the research project. As this course is taught in the future, our plan for continuous improvement should include a process to reach out to the enrolled students and inform them of the importance of following the assigned rubric for this assignment. In short, the aforementioned step should move us beyond the benchmark figure (90%) established for CJUS 603.

2019-2020:

One section of CJUS 603 was taught during the current reporting period (Fall 2019). An analysis of the empirical data reveals that 11 out of the 21 enrolled students in CJUS 603 scored at least 90% or above on this correctional assignment. In addition, seven students received grades ranging from 80-89%. Unfortunately, three students scored at the 60% or below range. Based upon the aforementioned data, the benchmark for this assessment was not achieved. In retrospect, the class average for this assignment was five percentage points from meeting the established benchmark. The plan for continuous improvement will be focused on identifying aspects of the assignment that can be enhanced for assessment purposes.

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, one section of CJUS 603 (Spring 2021) was taught by Dr. Clark. Twenty-one students completed the writing assignment (please see the attachment for a copy of the assignment). An analysis of the data reveals that 100% of the students met the benchmark score (80%) set for this assignment. Furthermore, the mean class average was 88.6%. The grade distribution was as follows:

96 (2), 95, 94 (2) 92 (2), 91, 90 (2)  
89, 88, 87 (2), 85, 84, 83 (3), 82, 80

The plan for continuous improvement will include a modification of the writing assignment. Although the benchmark was met for this assessment, it appears that some students were not able to assess and analyze the implications and assumptions associated with the future of corrections and/or with the importance of reaffirming rehabilitation as a correctional goal.

*Files: See list of attachments to view. (Requires Adobe Reader or compatible viewer).*

final cjus 603 2021 new

## **10 Assessment and Benchmark CJUS 604 Pre-Test/Post-Test [Not Approved]**

Assessment: CJUS 604 pre-test and post-test.

Benchmark: 84% of students will earn a score of 80% or higher on the post-test.

[Outcome Links](#)

**Research [Program]**

Students will learn methodology to conduct research in the field of criminal justice.

**10.1 Data**

Term	# of students completing pre- and post-test	Students meeting benchmark		Average scores		% change from pre- to post-test
		#	%	Pre-test	Post-test	
Spring 2021	23	9	39.1%	4.30	5.61	30.5%

**10.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement**

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, Dr. Steve Verrill taught CJUS 604 (Spring 2021). Dr. Verrill adopted a new assessment for CJUS 604. This new assessment was based on a pre-test/post-test design that included 10 questions. The post-test benchmark score distribution target was set at 84%. An analysis of the data reveals that the actual post-test score distribution (39%) was below the target post-test mark of 84%.

Based upon the findings of the pre-test/post-test design, the plan for continuous improvement will center on weekly reflection essays over the assigned reading material.

**11 Assessment and Benchmark CJUS 605 Pre-Test/Post-Test [Not Approved]**

Assessment: CJUS 605 pre-test and post-test.

Benchmark: 84% of students will earn a score of 80% or higher on the post-test.

**Outcome Links****Criminological Theory [Program]**

Students demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of criminological theory and research methods.

**11.1 Data**

Term	# of students completing pre- and post-test	Students meeting benchmark		Average scores		% change from pre- to post-test
		#	%	Pre-test	Post-test	
Fall 2020	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spring 2021	7	3	42.9%	4.71	5.71	21.2%

**11.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement**

2020-2021:

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, two CJUS 605 classes were taught by Dr. Verrill (Fall 2020, Spring 2021). Dr. Verrill adopted a new assessment for CJUS 605. This new assessment was based on a pre-test/post-test design that included 10 questions. The post-test benchmark score distribution target was set at 84%. An analysis of the data reveals that the pre-test/post-test results are not available for the Fall 2020 section. This is a function of the Hurricanes (Laura and Delta) that occurred during the Fall 2020 term. In terms of the Spring 2021 CJUS 605 class, the pre-test/post-test was administered. An analysis of the data reveals that the actual post-test score distribution (43%) was below the target post-test mark of 84%.

Based upon the findings of the pre-test/post-test design from the CJUS 605 Spring 2021 class, the plan for continuous improvement will center on weekly reflection essays over the assigned reading material.



End of report