Proposal Date: January 28, 2013

**Potter College of Arts and Letters**

**Department of Sociology**

**Proposal to Create a New Major Program**

**(Action Item)**

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**1. Identification of program:**

* 1. Program title: Criminology
  2. Degree Type: Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
  3. Classification of Instructional Program Code (CIP): 45.0401
  4. Required hours in proposed major program: 34
  5. Special information: Students pursuing a major in criminology must select a minor or second major. However, students majoring in criminology may not have a second major in sociology.
  6. Program admission requirements: Admission to Western Kentucky University
  7. Catalog description: The Criminology program will provide graduates with detailed knowledge of the etiology of criminal offending, victimization, and societal reactions to crime. This program provides the skill sets necessary for a variety of vocations, including social services, non-profit, governmental, and public and private research agencies at the local, state, national or international level. The major in criminology requires a minimum of 34 semester hours and leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. Students majoring in criminology must select a minor or second major. However, students majoring in criminology may not have a second major in sociology.

Students can work with an advisor to develop an individualized program to fit his or her personal interests in selecting elective courses. Students are strongly encouraged to take CRIM 231: Introduction to Criminal Justice during the first year of study, as it serves as a foundational course for higher level criminology courses. The following table contains the suggested sequence of courses:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sample Four-Year Program of Study for the Criminology Major** | | | |
|  | | **Courses** | **Hours** |
| **Freshman Year** | *Fall* | CRIM 231 | 3 |
| *Spring* | CRIM elective | 3 |
| **Sophomore Year** | *Fall* | CRIM 330 | 3 |
| *Spring* | SOCL 300  Select from SOCL 309, CRIM 332 or CRIM 380 | 3  3 |
| **Junior Year** | *Fall* | SOCL 302  Select from SOCL 309, CRIM 332, or CRIM 380 | 3  3 |
| *Spring* | Select from SOCL 309, CRIM 332 or CRIM 380  CRIM elective | 3  3 |
| **Senior Year** | *Fall* | CRIM elective  CRIM elective | 3  3 |
| *Spring* | CRIM 499 | 1 |
| **Total Hours for Criminology Major** | | | **34** |

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. Reason for developing the proposed major program:

Criminology bachelor’s degree programs are in high demand, with the number of criminology graduates more than doubling between 1998 and 2008 (*ASA Task Force,* 2010). The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* expects slightly better than average growth rate in this field between 2010 and 2020. The department of sociology currently houses a criminology minor and a criminology Master’s degree program, yet does not offer a criminology major degree program. The proposed major will fill this noticeable gap. Moreover, the Commonwealth university system does not offer a bachelor’s degree program in criminology. The current minor in criminology has attracted a large number of students to the department. As of the fall of 2012, 392 students have a declared minor in criminology, and student demand for a major in criminology is high. The proposed program will meet this demand.

By combining the theoretical examination of various individual, social, and structural variables related to crime in society with a firm understanding of basic research methodologies and data analysis, graduates from the proposed major program will have the skills necessary to analytically examine social problems with a firm understanding of issues of inequality and diversity - abilities that are increasingly necessary in a changing society. Moreover, shifting economic conditions have reduced the overall budgets of a variety of criminal justice and social service agencies and agency leaders are increasingly requiring that employees have research and data analysis skills, as well as a firm understanding of human and social behavior that can be related to the prevention and management of criminal behavior and victimization through the development of innovative policy solutions to more efficiently respond to the crime problem. Students graduating from the proposed program will be qualified for a variety of vocations with various agencies, including social, non-profit, governmental, and research agencies across the Commonwealth or at the national or international level.

Criminology as a distinct discipline emerged directly from the sociological examination of cultural influences and structural forces within the social environment and their influence on criminality. Criminology programs provide students not only with basic system level knowledge, but also a strong command of research methodologies and the direct application of empirically derived theoretical principles into practical solutions to the crime problem. Compared to traditional criminal justice programs, criminology has a strong inter-disciplinary focus derived from its origins within the field of sociology. As such criminology draws its strength from the sociological examination of social systems and behavior, social inequality, and social justice by applying these core issues directly to a theoretically grounded examination of the etiology of criminal offending, victimology, and broader implications for society.

Criminology and criminal justice, though related fields differ markedly in their substantive focus, with criminology having a longer historical traditional and inter-disciplinary nature. Criminology as a field of study traces its roots to the earliest studies of crime with most courses on criminological theory beginning with a discussion of early philosophers and contract theorists, such as Hobbes, Bentham, and Becarria. Criminal justice programs arose later in history as a direct response to calls to increase professionalism within various criminal justice agencies in the 1960s. Criminal justice programs have historically been oriented around a practical, real-world systems approach to the various components of the criminal justice system, namely the police, courts, and corrections. Criminology programs adopt a scientific examination of the causes and correlates of crime and societal reactions to crime and deviance, strongly grounded in critical thinking, theoretical knowledge, and sound methodology. While criminal justice programs usually focus on vocational knowledge in the fields of policing, corrections or other system-specific criminal justice occupations, criminology takes as its focus a critical examination on issues of inequality within the criminal justice system, alternatives to incarceration, the evolving definitions of deviance, or social forces leading to changes in the law or society’s reaction to offending. Though changes in the criminal justice system have traditionally informed criminological research, criminology provides a critical examination of broader questions such as what biological, psychological, and sociological factors affect criminal propensity and how theoretical knowledge can be directly applied to develop sound preventative policies and theoretically informed solutions to the crime problem. The proposed program will prepare graduates to contribute to this effort.

* 1. Projected enrollment in the proposed major program: From 2010 to 2012, the sociology department graduated 379 students with a declared minor in criminology. It is expected, that given the option, a portion of these minors in criminology would choose to major in criminology. Benchmark institutions with a criminology major or combined criminology/criminal justice major were contacted and the institutions that responded provided the following enrollment estimates:
* Ball State University: 600
* California State University - Fresno: 1600
* Indiana State University: 777
* Missouri State University: 550
* Northern Arizona University: 811
* University of Northern Iowa: 335

Given the above figures and the popularity of criminology as a major at other institutions it is reasonable to expect approximately 70 to 80 new majors each year.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed major program to other programs now offered by the department:

The department of sociology currently has an existing criminology minor and a Master’s program. The proposed major program will fill the void between these two programs and likely increase enrollment in the current Master’s program.

As stated in section 2.1, criminology as a discipline arose directly from the field of sociology, and examinations of the etiology of crime and society’s response to it are intricately tied to core sociological concepts. The proposed major program in criminology will be a natural companion to the existing sociology major program by applying the sociological mindset and examination of individual and collective experience specifically to a concentrated study of the crime problem and the social institutions designed to control it. This will provide students with a more inter-disciplinary experience than traditional criminal justice programs. As stated in a report released by the American Sociological Association (ASA), criminology is the most frequent minor, concentration, or second major housed within a sociology department.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed major program to other university programs:

There is currently no major program in the university that allows students to focus exclusively on theories of criminal offending, variations in victimization, or social reactions to criminal offending. However, criminology programs usually have an inter-disciplinary focus and this trend is maintained by the proposed major program not only through the inclusion of sociology electives, but also courses in the areas of history, psychology, political science and other disciplines. The proposed major program will not overlap with existing majors outside the sociology department and simply extends the current structure and focus of the existing criminology minor program. However, it will allow students interested in social responses to crime to pursue a major reflective of this interest.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed major program to similar programs offered elsewhere in Kentucky and in other states (including programs at benchmark institutions):

Criminology is a fast-growing major. From 1998 to 2008, the number of bachelor’s degrees in criminology more than doubled growing from 2,789 degrees conferred in 1998 to 5,750 in 2008 (*ASA Task Force*, 2010). These numbers do not include bachelor’s degrees in related fields, such as criminal justice or justice administration. The growing demand for this program is reflected in the number of benchmark institutions that have a crime-related major program (see below); only Eastern Illinois University does not offer a similar major program, though a minor in criminology is available. However, only California State University - Fresno, Missouri State University, and University of Northern Iowa have stand alone bachelor’s degrees in criminology, with Ball State University, Eastern Michigan University, Indiana State University, and Northern Arizona University offering a bachelor’s degree in ‘criminology and criminal justice’. Some form of crime-related bachelor’s degree program is also offered at California State University - Chico (*Criminal Justice*); Central Missouri State University (*Criminal Justice*); Florida Atlantic University (*Criminal Justice*); Middle Tennessee State University (*Criminal Justice Administration*); Montclair State University (*Justice Studies*); Oakland University (*Criminal Justice*); Stephen F. Austin State University (*Criminal Justice*); Towson University (*Criminal Justice*); Western Illinois University (*Law Enforcement and Justice Administration*); Wichita State University (*Criminal Justice*); and Youngstown State University (*Applied Science in Criminal Justice*).

Eastern Kentucky University does have a bachelor of science program in criminal justice and police studies. However, the criminal justice program at EKU aims to provide students with a “foundation for employment opportunities within the criminal justice field”. The major program proposed here and outlined elsewhere in this proposal has a much broader focus that will allow students to translate their skills to careers outside traditional criminal justice institutions.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed major program to the university mission and objectives:

The proposed criminology major program serves the university mission and objectives and prepares graduates to be “productive, engaged, and socially responsible” by encouraging students to think critically about the crime problem in American society and assist in the development of meaningful solutions that are sensitive to issues of social justice and inequality. The criminology program has a core focus on enhancing students’ theoretical understanding of the etiology of crime while developing sound research and analytical skills that are integral to providing innovative solutions to the crime problem in society. The program will prepare students for entrance into a variety of professional fields within the Commonwealth at the local and state levels, as well as the federal and international level within the criminal justice system, governmental agencies, research institutions and non-profit agencies, while providing them with a strong foundation for lifelong learning through graduate study in criminology and related fields.

**3. Objectives of the proposed major program:**

Similar to the existing sociology major, the proposed criminology major and coursework are designed to further awareness and understanding of social causes and consequences of human behavior, including criminal offending, victimization, and the social forces that influence society’s reaction to these phenomena. The proposed major program is not intended to provide practice-oriented or vocational knowledge that is appropriately left to in-service training provided by occupational specific agencies. Instead the proposed major program is intended to provide graduates with a broader background more readily applicable to a variety of career fields. The program will provide graduates with a strong skill set enabling them to approach problems methodologically, combined with the critical and analytical reasoning necessary to developing innovative solutions to crime as a social problem within an increasingly diverse society. In keeping with the overall mission of the sociology department, the proposed major in criminology will provide students with the ability to discuss the crime problem from an empirically based and theoretically sound perspective that allows them to see beyond stereotypes and convenient slogans, frame and solve problems realistically and communicate these solutions to a variety of audiences both orally and in writing.

**4. Program description:**

4.1 Curriculum:

The major in criminology requires a minimum of 34 semester hours. Students majoring in criminology must select a minor or second major. However, students majoring in criminology may not have a second major in sociology.

The following core courses are required for a major (22 credit hours):

* CRIM 231: Introduction to Criminal Justice (3 hours)
* SOCL 300: Using Statistics in Sociology (3 hours)
* SOCL 302: Strategies of Social Research (3 hours)
* SOCL 309: Social Deviance (3 hours)
* CRIM 330: Criminology (3 hours)
* CRIM 332: Juvenile Delinquency (3 hours)
* CRIM 380: Penology (3 hours)
* CRIM 499: Senior Seminar (1 hour)

Students are required to take an additional 12 hours of elective courses, selecting from the following:

* CRIM 232: Introduction to Law Enforcement
* CRIM 233: Alternatives to Confinement
* CRIM 361: Race, Class, and Crime
* CRIM 432: Sociology of Criminal Law
* CRIM 434: Organized Crime
* CRIM 437: The Death Penalty in America
* CRIM 438: Victimology
* CRIM 439: Internship in Criminology
* CRIM 446: Gender, Crime and Justice
* CRIM 451: White Collar Crime
* SOCL 359: Sexuality & Society
* SOCL 435: Family Violence
* PS 220: Judicial Process
* PS 326: Constitutional Law
* PS 328: Criminal Justice
* PS 350: Political Terrorism
* HIST 445: American Legal History to 1865
* HIST 446: American Legal History Since 1865
* SWRK 356: Services to Juvenile Offenders
* PSY 440: Abnormal Psychology
* PSY 441: Aspects of Alcoholism
* PSY 470: Psychology and the Law
* CHEM 430: Forensic Chemistry
* PH 165: Drug Abuse
* ANTH 300: Forensic Anthropology

4.2 Accreditation, certification, approval, and/or licensure: Not applicable.

4.3 Program delivery: The curriculum for the proposed major is composed of courses already taught under the existing minor in criminology. The courses will continue to be offered primarily in the classroom with additional courses offered online or through independent learning.

**5. Resources:**

* 1. Faculty:

Currently the sociology department has faculty members who teach exclusively within the existing criminology minor program, as well as faculty members who teach within both the sociology major and criminology minor. As the proposed major is comprised of courses already taught within the existing criminology minor, under the current course rotation, the department believes that staffing is sufficient for the initial implementation of the program on the main campus. However, if the proposed major grows substantially over time an additional faculty line will be necessary to support that growth. If the proposed major is extended to the regional campuses an additional faculty line is necessary to support that extension at the time of implementation.

* 1. Technological and electronic informational resources (e.g., databases, e-journals)

Current resources that exist in support of the criminology minor are sufficient to support the proposed criminology major.

* 1. Facilities and equipment:

The resources that exist in support of the criminology minor are sufficient to support the proposed criminology major. However, if this program grows beyond expectations, the department might need to request additional resources and faculty lines to support that growth.

**6. Proposed term for implementation: Fall 2014**

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

SociologyDepartment/Division: February 15, 2013

Potter College Curriculum Committee March 7, 2013

Contact with Office of Academic Affairs

re: CPE Posting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_