

**CRJU 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice**  
**Learning Outcomes Assessment Project**  
**Executive Summary**

**Stage 1: Designing and Proposing a Learning Outcomes Project**

The Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRJU 101) course acquaints students with the structure, operation and effectiveness of the American criminal justice system. Each component of the system is viewed historically and philosophically in an effort to provide a foundation for advanced studies in the field or for career advancement. A pre/post multiple-choice exam covering 20 major content areas was designed by the Maryland Criminal Justice Articulation Task Force (MCJATF). MCJATF is an organization made up of criminal justice faculty from 2-year and 4-year colleges in Maryland. (Note: MCJATF changed its name to the Maryland Criminal Justice Consortium of College Educators-MCJCCE in 2007.) Each exam question was matched to the course objective(s) that it most appropriately measured. The initial assessment occurred in fall 2005 and was repeated in fall 2007.

**Stage 2: Implementing the Design and Collecting and Analyzing the Data**

The results of the initial assessment (2005) showed that of the students enrolled in CRJU101, 74% were successful in receiving grades in the A-D range, 26% received an F or withdrew from the course. The mean score on the LOA exam for CCBC (all three campuses combined) was 42.64 out of 80 (53%), with African Americans scoring significantly lower at 38.92 (compared to majority students at 44.81).

**Stage 3: Redesigning the Course to Improve Student Learning**

After an extensive review of options, the faculty decided to examine other textbooks in an effort to find one that was more appropriate for a course that required no prerequisites. A book was selected that appeared to offer a more student-friendly format (*Criminal Justice in Action: The Core*). Faculty also selected written assignments to supplement classroom presentations. These objective-related assignments were based on an analysis of the 2005 pre-test and post-test results that showed a decrease in student success in five objectives. Several written assignments for each objective were developed that satisfied and supplemented each learning objective. The assignments were mandatory to ensure that the students gained value from them.

**Stage 4: Implementing Course Revisions and Reassessing Student Learning**

The second assessment occurred during the fall 2007 semester and showed improved overall success rates. The fall 2007 findings revealed the mean score on the assessment instrument improved from 40.44 (51%) to 52.86 (66%), a 15 percent change. Moreover, both African American (AA) students and majority students scored significantly higher on the 2007 assessment (AA students 38.92 to 46.88 / majority students 44.81 to 56.37). There is some narrowing of the achievement gap between the mean scores of African American students and majority students (46.88 and 56.37 respectively) compared to 2005 (38.92 and 44.81).

respectively). Those topic areas in which interventions were introduced showed slight to moderate mean score improvements with one objective dropping by 2% in mean score.

### **Stage 5: Final Analysis and Reporting Results**

This initiative has proven the importance of collaboration among the instructors who teach CRJU 101. That collaboration will continue at department meetings and other forums in an effort to improve teaching successes and student learning. Because this course has no prerequisites, a wide range of students register for it with varying degrees of success. In order to improve the success rate, a co-requisite of English 052 is under consideration.

New and updated course content will be discussed and implemented to ensure course viability and student interest. Objectives that were only partially improved or did not show improvement will be closely reviewed for revised interventions to bring them in line with the other objectives that were significantly improved by interventions.

The Chair of the Criminal Justice Studies Program will ensure that this initiative continues to be viable and an important part of the objectives of the affected faculty members. The Learning Outcomes Assessment project will be placed on the agenda for all general School of Justice meetings.