Criminal Justice Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: November 18, 2024
Time: 3:30pm

External Participants:
Scott Farrell – Teacher, Kishwaukee Education Consortium
Jason Leverton – Commander, DeKalb Police Department
Jeff Wig – Deputy Chief of Police, Sycamore Police Department

Internal Participants:
Barbara Leach – Vice President of Instruction
Chase Budziak – Dean of Instruction
Jescelynne Gibbons – Associate Dean of Instruction
Joseph Przybyla – Criminal Justice Faculty
Thomas Jones – Adjunct Criminal Justice Faculty
Catherine Macias – Administrative Specialist

I.   Program Update
    A.   Fall 2024 Enrollment
       i.   College-Wide Growth: Enrollment has increased by 7.7% compared to Fall 2023.
      ii.   Criminal Justice (CRJ) Program
         1.   The program recorded 591 credit hours for Fall 2024, reflecting a slight decrease of 12 credit hours (-2%) from Fall 2023.
         2.   Facilities
            a.   The program has successfully transitioned to the conference center area.
         3.   8-Week Courses: The transition from 16-week courses to 8-week course formats has been successful in the criminal justice program resulting in improved retention rates, grades, and greater accessibility for non-traditional students.
      iii.   Internships & Work-Based Learning
         1.   Two students are currently serving internships during Fall 2024: One student with the Illinois State Police, another student is interning at the DeKalb Police Department. Two additional students are confirmed for internships in Spring 2025.
         2.   Kishwaukee College welcomes opportunities to establish new internship and apprenticeship partnerships with local agencies and employers. Additionally, the College seeks to collaborate with universities and employers to offer internship

opportunities for transfer students pursuing four-year degrees in forensic science, probation and parole, and related fields.

II.   Employer Discussion & Feedback

    A. Trends

        i. Committee members discussed anticipated changes in the law enforcement field over the next 3–5 years. Key areas of focus include adapting to technological advancements, addressing generational shifts in the workforce, and preparing for evolving community expectations.

        ii. Local law enforcement representatives reported a resurgence of interest in law enforcement careers after a 4–6 year period of declining interest. Agencies are now seeing a significant increase in applications for positions, reflecting a renewed appeal of law enforcement as a career path.

        iii. Members of the committee also highlighted additional careers that the criminal justice program prepares students for including public safety, corrections, legal services, and social work.

    B. Hiring

        i. The minimum hiring requirement for law enforcement and correction positions remains at 60 credit hours, though this can be waived for lateral hires.

        ii. Candidates with college credits have an advantage in hiring and starting wages.

        iii. The committee emphasized the importance of strong interpersonal and communication skills, as applicants often struggle with effectively managing difficult conversations and interacting with the public.

        iv. Discussion followed regarding how course delivery methods such as in-person, hybrid, and online influence the development of these skills.

    C. Skills

        i. Attention to detail thorough report-writing, and effective communication are essential skills for law enforcement professionals. Common barriers to employment include weak technical writing skills, inadequate interpersonal abilities, and insufficient physical fitness.

        ii. The committee recommended enhancing technical and report-writing training while incorporating guest speakers from the field to provide real-world insights. There is a requirement for applicants to pass the physical fitness power test for many law enforcement positions.

    D. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

        i. AI is increasingly being utilized for virtual training and real-time health monitoring in law enforcement. However, legal challenges and

concerns about security and privacy slow the adoption of AI-assisted reporting and other advanced technologies. These factors will significantly influence the timeline for broader implementation of AI in the industry.

III. Next Meeting Date and Committee Members
   A. Spring Advisory Meeting
      i. The committee expressed flexibility in meeting formats but preferred Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday afternoons due to lighter workloads on those days.
   B. Recruitment of New Committee Members
      i. To increase active advisory committee members, the committee suggested inviting experienced Field Training Officers (FTOs) to join the advisory board for insights on training and development.