

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology at Appalachian State University

Introduction

Appalachian State University notified the Office of the President of its intent to plan a Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology degree (CIP# 43.0104) in March 2005. The university requests authorization to establish the program in August 2006.

Program Description

The proposed program will be located in the Department of Political Science. It is an interdisciplinary degree designed to provide broad-based education for individuals preparing to enter the field of criminal justice at the managerial level, enhance the capabilities and performance of those currently in the criminal justice field, foster pertinent research in criminal justice, and prepare individuals wishing to pursue a terminal degree (Ph.D.) in Criminal Justice or Criminology. The program will consist of required courses in Criminal Justice, Criminology, and Sociology that are designed to provide an overview of the criminal justice system, research methods, and social and theoretical issues; an internship, directed research project, or thesis designed to link theory with practice; and elective courses offering concentrated areas of study in Political Science, Criminal Justice, Sociology, Psychology, Management, and Public Administration.

Program Need

The US Department of Labor and the NC Employment Exchange Commission both forecast higher than average growth in criminal justice activities. Criminal Justice, Homeland Security Technologies, and Forensic Science are identified as growth cluster areas by the Western NC Economic Development Commission. Surveys of students enrolled in Criminal Justice courses at ASU indicate substantial interest in a master's program. No master's level Criminal Justice program is currently available in this area of NC. With the re-organization of many federal law enforcement agencies, demand for individuals trained in Criminal Justice and Criminology has grown in agencies such as the FBI, CIA, and INS. A four-year degree is required to be a special agent at the federal level. The proposed program complements the ASU Institute for Health and Human Services, which will maximize the capacity of health and human services disciplines to address regional needs through collaborative research, training, and clinical services. It is anticipated that 45 students will be enrolled in the program by its fourth year.

Resources

The only additional state resources required are enrollment expansion funding based on increased enrollment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology degree at Appalachian State University effective August 2006.