

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

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PROBLEMS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

There is a trend throughout the criminal justice system towards greater "professionalization". Yet, the exact nature of professionalization has not been clearly identified, including the education qualifications for a "professional". All components of the criminal justice system appear to desire an educated staff, but few have clearly specified what kinds of educational services are most desirable. The universities, colleges, and technical institutes in North Carolina have responded to this community need in an inconsistent manner. While the types of programs serving the criminal justice system in North Carolina are diverse, they do not at this time adequately answer the range of criminal justice system needs.

Clearly, there should be some clarification of exactly what the criminal justice system wants and needs, and how the universities, colleges, and technical institutes should best answer those needs. This position paper represents a response of the North Carolina Association of Criminal Justice Educators to these questions and includes recommendations to the criminal justice community and the colleges, technical institutes and universities in North Carolina.

STATEWIDE NEEDS

The criminal justice system has clearly and decisively identified the need to expand the resources of Criminal Justice education in North Carolina. The mandate given the universities, colleges, and technical institutes within our state is apparent in the action of several criminal justice organizations and agencies.

The North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council¹ has endorsed the concept of Criminal Justice as the most appropriate and

¹Enacted into law by Chapter 17A of the General Statutes of North Carolina.

viable academic major for individuals entering the field². At the May 15, 1974 meeting of the Council a minimum standard of an associate degree was established for youth corrections workers. Regarding employment, the standard states:

"It is recommended that, all other qualifications being equal, preference be given to applicants possessing a degree in a Criminal Justice area." (N. C. Criminal Justice Standards Council, 1974: S33/2)

The Law Enforcement Associations Council has taken a similar position with regard to those completing undergraduate or graduate programs in Criminal Justice.

The Governor's Committee on Law and Order has adopted an "action plan" for "Criminal Justice Personnel Development Programs" in North Carolina which directly recognized the need for additional educational resources in Criminal Justice. The Governor's Committee "Action Plan" states:

"The Governor's Committee on Law and Order in October, 1972 determined that there were significant personnel deficiencies in all components of the criminal justice system in North Carolina which were detrimental to the efficient and effective operation of the entire system...it specifically acknowledged that education and training of all system personnel is the foremost priority of the Committee in its endeavors for the improvement of strengthening of personnel...As a general rule, those limited North Carolina colleges and universities making offerings of curricula relating to criminal justice have attempted to respond to the need for education of law enforcement and correctional personnel without adequate financial funding and sufficient institutional administrative support in program development. Moreover, curricula propoiting to involve criminal justice topics related to pre-service and in-service personnel have frequently not actually developed into the creation of separate and distinct Departments of Criminal Justice. Consequently, there has been a failure to develop an adequate manpower pool of qualified personnel." (Governor's Committee on Law and Order, 1974: 1-3)

² Recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Council dated March 13, 1974.

The "Action Plan" further states that one of the program goals is to

"...develop and expand on a selected, regulated, and coordinated basis quality criminal justice Associate, Baccalaureate, Master and Doctorate academic programs in institutions of higher learning for utilization by in-service personnel and pre-service students for development and manpower resources...applicants are restricted to those educational institutions currently making Criminal Justice degree offerings and preference of this class of applicants may at the discretion of the Committee be granted to those institutions having separate and distinct Criminal Justice Departments awarding degrees in Criminal Justice with a coordination of study in related areas of either law enforcement, courts, or corrections." (Governor's Committee on Law and Order, 1974: 19-20)

The Director of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council has stated, in regard to the problems addressed in this paper:

"There is no doubt that we need a graduate program in Criminal Justice in North Carolina. We need a program that will focus on the needs of middle management personnel, a program that will prepare instructors for the community colleges and a program that will advance the study of crime and delinquency generally. The graduate programs presently available in North Carolina do not satisfactorily answer the unique needs of the criminal justice system. We need programs which focus on the academic discipline of Criminal Justice. The programs of other disciplines simply are not satisfactory.

Individuals desiring advanced study specifically in areas of use to the criminal justice system, such as criminological research, corrections, or criminal justice administration now have to leave our state and often do not return. It is clear that there is sufficient demand for such programs that enrollment would be no problem. I expect our Council and probably other agencies in the State to take a formal position on this matter some time in the future and request the universities to offer such programs."³

Perhaps the clearest mandate was provided by the North Carolina General Assembly which recently established the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training system. According to Senate Bill 667 the duties of that body are to:

"...formulate basic plans for and promote the development of a comprehensive system of education and training for the officers and employees of the criminal justice agencies...and shall provide advice and leadership bringing together the various components of the system and implementing and operating the system." (Willson, et. al., 1973: 106)

³ Personal communication with Mr. John Faircloth, Director, North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council, May 23, 1974.

This bill clearly demonstrates the State's concern with Criminal Justice education.

Despite such mandates, only Guilford College presently offers a full-range baccalaureate degree program in Criminal Justice. Furthermore, while many other states have several departments of Criminology or Criminal Justice offering Criminal Justice degrees from undergraduate through the Ph.D., there is not a single graduate program in Criminal Justice in North Carolina. Consequently, some of our brightest and best trained students leave North Carolina to pursue their education at the graduate level and never return.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

The mandate for Criminal Justice education in North Carolina complements similar developments at the national level. Recently, two massive "blue ribbon" commissions at the federal level reached conclusions similar to those of our state agencies. These two commissions recommended the development of Criminal Justice resources in higher education, but specifically avoided the recommendation that other disciplines be adapted to serve the criminal justice system. The commissions repeatedly emphasized that Criminal Justice education should be relevant, pragmatic, and meaningful. It appears to be generally accepted that these qualities are most typically found in Departments of Criminal Justice.

The 1973 National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, addressing itself to the development of "Criminal Justice education" programs, made recommendations which include the following:

- "...3. Develop educational curricula and training programs on the basis of identified knowledge and skill requirements: terminate all unnecessary programs.
- ...4. Develop for all criminal justice positions recruitment and selection criteria that incorporate the appropriate knowledge and skill requirements...

Criminal justice system curricula and programs should be established by agencies of higher education to unify the body of knowledge in criminology, social science, law, public administration and corrections and to serve as a basis for preparing persons to work in the criminal justice system. The following factors should be included in the development of curricula and programs.

1. A range of Associate of Arts programs through graduate offerings should be established as rapidly as possible.
2. Care should be taken to separate the academic nature of the curriculum from training content and functions best performed by police, courts, and corrections agencies.
3. Liaisons should be established with criminal justice agencies to insure that theoretical content keeps pace with rapid new developments in the field." (Peterson, 1973: 168-170)

Other national commissions have made similar recommendations. Moreover, the need for the expansion of the discipline of Criminal Justice is recognized throughout the scientific and professional literature (see References). Greater Criminal Justice education resources are needed because criminal justice activities are expanding and becoming more sophisticated (Senna, 1974). In 1972, there were nearly a million employees in our nation's criminal justice system (Turner, et. al., 1974). In fiscal 1973 alone, the federal L.E.A.A. block grant program allocated over 841 million dollars to the states' criminal justice systems.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Criminal Justice as an interdisciplinary academic discipline involves the scientific study of all matters concerning crime and delinquency. The discipline is comprised of four components: (1) the study of the psychological, cultural, political, economic, and social causes of criminal and delinquent behavior, (2) the analysis of the system of institutions designed to prevent and control crime and delinquency, (3) examination of interactions between offenders and those institutions which seek to identify, ap-

prehend, prosecute and rehabilitate them, (4) the search for improved means of meeting the goals of justice and social control.

The first component, which is synonymous with the sub-field of Criminology, utilizes social and behavioral science techniques to study the etiology of criminal and delinquent behavior. The second focuses upon the system qua system. It is concerned with describing, explaining and evaluating the various organizational components of the criminal justice system, broadly identified as police, courts and corrections, and with studying the nature and extent of the systemic linkages existing between them. The third component is concerned with the relationship between the criminal justice system and its clients, the offenders. This study of the relationship between the system and its clients is oriented toward identifying the effects, both positive and negative, each has upon the other. The fourth combines the knowledge acquired by the first three components in order to develop a basis from which to seek new strategies for improving our system of justice.

A broad approach, which includes all components of the system and studies all the possible linkages between them, offers the best basis for educating individuals who must eventually work within and provide leadership for the system, both now and in coming years. The discipline of Criminal Justice, focused upon education rather than training, is grounded in social and behavioral science theory and research, and seeks to provide the student with an informed and rational understanding of the criminal justice system. The emphasis is as much upon developing skills necessary to cope with unknown future problems as it is upon learning how to deal with current situations. This means that Criminal Justice students must

not only learn specific skills, but also develop an ability to handle problem solving at abstract levels of conceptualization and in a wide range of situations.

Criminal Justice does not differ from other academic fields of study focusing on a specific area of human conduct (such as Political Science or Economics) except in the degree to which it endeavors to provide relevant, pragmatic and meaningful curricula for professional people employed in the criminal justice system. A similar function is performed for other elements of our society by Departments of Business Administration and Education. If academia is to execute its responsibilities to the community at large, the universities and colleges must develop relevant academic programs in Criminal Justice just as they have done for other areas of social concern. As we are presently in a period of rising school costs and decreasing student enrollments, the temptation for other disciplines to provide adapted programs is great. Efforts toward adapting other disciplines, designed for other purposes, to the needs of the criminal justice system should be resisted.

GROWTH OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

It is clear that national trends in Criminal Justice education are in the directions identified in this paper (Senna, 1974). Moreover, recent surveys clearly indicate the discipline of Criminal Justice is growing at an unprecedented rate. Karman and Klyman, for example, reported enrollment trends through 1980 for Criminal Justice educational programs in optimistic terms. They state that...

"...we are convinced that programs in Criminal Justice, especially those offered at the graduate level, will continue

to experience dramatic growth...American higher education will enroll at least 15,000 graduate students in Criminal Justice in the near future...this figure should be considered conservative...by the year 1980, Criminal Justice students will receive at least 3.3% of the Master's degrees, at least 1.2% Doctor's degrees awarded..."

As academic preparation continues to be emphasized as a sine qua non for the realization of professional status of criminal justice practitioners capricious growth in graduate level Criminal Justice programs will likely ensue to meet the professional staffing exigencies of those in the public agencies they seek to serve." (Karman and Klyman, 1973: 190-191)

Other studies (see References) have clearly established this national trend.

POLICY STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

The North Carolina Association of Criminal Justice Educators formally adopts the discipline of Criminal Justice as the academic field of study most appropriate for individuals employed or to be employed in the criminal justice system, and for the purely academic study of the area of human phenomenon identified as crime and delinquency. We concur with the national commissions' recommendation that programs from the associate through the doctorate level be implemented as soon as possible.

North Carolina's universities, colleges and technical institutes should commit themselves to answering the needs of the criminal justice system. Such commitments should be supported by the allocation of resources for the development of Departments of Criminal Justice sufficiently autonomous and strong to provide the necessary services for our society.

It has been argued the social significance of Criminal Justice is greater, generally, than that of other behavioral and social science disciplines. Criminal Justice, interfacing directly with immediate community issues, concerns such matters as freedom, dignity, life and death, fear,

repression and the police state, the murder, rape, and robbery victim, the abused child, and other human tragedy. We cannot afford to give less than ample resources to the issues of Criminal Justice.

The 1967 President's Crime Commission has written:

"...the cost of action is substantial but the cost of inaction is greater. Inaction would mean in effect that the nation would continue to avoid rather than confront one of its most crucial social problems: that it would accept for the next generation a huge if not immeasurable burden of wasted and destructive lives. Decisive action, on the other hand, could make a difference that would really matter within our time." (Katzenback, 1968: 185)

We recommend: 1. The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, the Trustees of the private universities and colleges throughout North Carolina, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training System Council, the North Carolina Association of Criminal Justice Educators, the Governor's Committee on Law and Order, and the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council establish a Criminal Justice Education Study Commission to assess the importance of Departments of Criminal Justice, and the relative weights which should be devoted to such programs by our universities and colleges. Also, the Commission should formulate guidelines for the development of Criminal Justice education throughout North Carolina. Such action, with the involvement of the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training System Council, is consistent with Chapter 17-B of the General Statutes of North Carolina.

2. That the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Council adopt an "educational specification" indicating that "all other qualifications being equal, preference should be given in the hiring of criminal justice professionals to individuals possessing a degree in Criminal Justice," because of the greater preparation provided by such degrees. Such specification should indicate those conditions in which other degrees might be more appropriate than a Criminal Justice degree.
3. That the North Carolina cities and counties provide educational incentives for police and other local criminal justice officers.
4. That the Department of Corrections develop educational incentives for correctional officers, and that similar incentives be provided at the county level for officers in local correctional facilities.
5. That in-service training programs be developed for criminal justice employees at all levels: state, county, and city, and that such programs be developed for officers in all the various sub-categories of the criminal justice system.

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