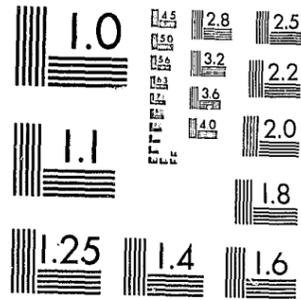


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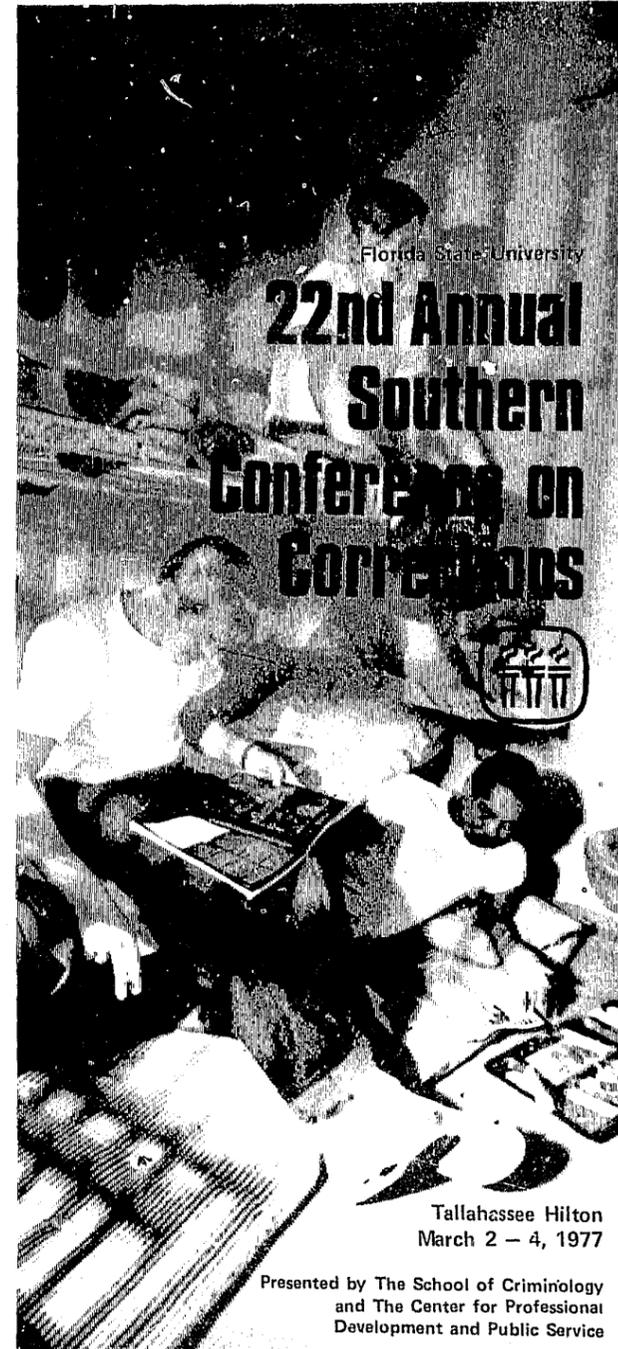
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CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION:  
STRIVING FOR QUALITY

Richard H. Ward  
Vice President  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
444 West 56 Street  
New York, N. Y. 10019

Presented at the: 22nd Annual Southern Conference on Corrections  
Tallahassee, Florida

Quality is a relative term. It can be, and frequently is, dependent upon a great number of variables, not the least of which is individual perception. In discussing quality in criminal justice higher education, I find few individuals who would admit that their programs lack quality. But this is to be expected because there are probably few individuals capable of making truly objective assessments of those things in which they are directly involved. Nevertheless, most of us have the capability of determining criteria for the quality of education. Can we define those criteria in such a way that our comments can be helpful in improving a specific program? I hope so, for much of what I have to say here today rests on the premise that it is possible to improve the quality of higher education in criminal justice. I will probably raise more questions than I answer; but this is progress for it was not too many years ago that we didn't know what questions to ask.

I will also endeavor to be brief, keeping in mind a story told by Ewald Nyquist, the Commissioner of Education in New York, about a United States Senator who once visited an Indian reservation and gave a lengthy speech full of promises of better things to come. The Senator began by guaranteeing a new era of Indian opportunity, to which the Indians gave a rising cry of "Hoya, hoyo." Encouraged, the Senator went on to promise one more thing after another -- better schools, better jobs, better health care, and so on. And with each promise, the Indians again shook the air with mighty cries of "hoya, hoyo."

Well as you can imagine, the Senator was so pleased by his reception that he asked to tour the reservation. At one point during the tour he said to the Chief: "I see you have many fine breeds of cattle. May I inspect them?" "Certainly," answered the Chief. "But be careful not to step in the 'hoya'."

I will endeavor, then, to avoid sounding like the Senator and should I occasionally profess to have simple answers to what is at best a complex problem, I hope you will not mutter "hoya" under your breath. Improving higher education in criminal justice is a relatively new problem, and my responses to it are tentative.

One might reasonably ask whether or not, other than in a philosophical sense, quality is an issue of primary importance in criminal justice higher education today. Frankly there are too many questionable criminal justice programs in the United States today. Although most programs are probably doing a creditable job and serving students well, there are too many programs which are not much more than a rip-off. However, these poorer programs may not represent the real problem for the future, because the weak programs will probably cease to exist as the LEEP money dwindles and as students begin to realize that their degrees aren't worth very much. The major problems will be upgrading the quality of marginal programs and strengthening many programs which have a national reputation, but which may have become

stagnant. Sometimes, "improvement" will involve protecting a program from its own institution, for some colleges criminal justice programs are viewed as "money-makers," and school administrators are tempted to expend inadequate resources to provide quantity instead of quality. In short, there is a great need for improvement, and it is time that we, together, begin working toward higher quality in criminal justice education. Whether you are a practitioner, an educator, or a student, quality is an issue that must be addressed.

In urging improvement, I am stressing a need for collective action. Over the past three years the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences has been developing an accreditation program which can be an important first step in improving the quality of criminal justice higher education. While recognizing the disparate and differing nature of many programs, this effort is designed to establish minimum guidelines for criminal justice programs. The Academy will not act alone in designing these guidelines for accreditation; instead it has established for this purpose, the Council on Criminal Justice Higher Education which includes representation from such organizations as the American Society of Criminology, the American Society of Public Administration, the IACP, and the American Correctional Association.

There has been some misunderstanding of the Academy's role and motives in initiating the accreditation effort, but I would like to assure you that much time and work has gone into the effort to determine the guidelines and procedures. The primary motivation of the Academy is to improve criminal justice programs.

One criticism of the proposed guidelines is that they are not strict enough; in some measure I agree, but I believe they will and should initiate a lengthy discussion and debate from which final guidelines will emerge.

The efforts of the Academy are not an end-all or a panacea. They are, however, the cautious first steps along a lengthy road toward accreditation according to professional standards.

In order to appraise existing programs realistically and to plan for the future intelligently, the ACJS Council on Criminal Justice Higher education and all of us in the field need to understand the development of criminal justice higher education in the United States.

Higher education in criminal justice developed in three stages in the United States. The first programs came into being at the School of Criminology at Berkeley, Florida State University and Michigan State University, generally because of the efforts of individual professors who fought hard to establish them.

In the second stage came those twenty programs which were established in 1965 because of an expressed need in a particular geographic location; again, these programs were usually supported by one or more dedicated individuals. John Jay College of Criminal Justice, for example, was founded because of the efforts of Michael Murphy, then Police Commissioner of New York City.

The third stage of development may be viewed as the post-LEAA era when programs were established around the country with the encouragement of the federal government. As a result of LEAA's efforts, there are now almost a thousand programs of higher education throughout the United States in one or more aspects of criminal justice.

The emphasis of these new programs was toward professionalization of criminal justice personnel through higher education. Essentially, I believe most of us would agree that a profession should have: a body of knowledge, recognition of a unique set of skills necessary to carry out tasks, a code of ethics, and, probably most importantly, acceptance by the public as a profession.

The concept of police professionalism is not new; it probably began with the writings of O. W. Wilson and V. A. Leonard. Higher education has been seen as the primary avenue toward professionalization, and higher education for criminal justice personnel has been supported by the pronouncements of the President's Crime Commission, by the Standards and Goals report and other studies, by LEEP funding, and

until recently, by the availability of G. I. Bill money for many students.

The early emphasis of many criminal justice programs has been on the development of management skills through higher education. I have no real quarrel with this emphasis if the students are potential managers. However, when students are pre-service, as they are in many programs, there is probably a need for a new curriculum based on human relations and front-line delivery of the criminal justice system. The rapid development of criminal justice programs has not allowed us to analyze the effects of our curricula. In many cases we have failed to examine the careers of our graduates or to ask the administrators of agencies what they need. One of the major problems with academics is that we frequently think we have all the answers - unfortunately they may not be "real-world" answers. We must pay more attention to the effects of our programs, and less on growth for growth's sake. In short, we need quality rather than quantity.

The emphasis on a college degree in criminal justice will continue, although many professionals, in every sense of the word, continue to work without degrees. This is changing as more and more individuals already possessing college degrees enter the field. Most progressive police departments or correctional institutions today require a college degree for the top position and many require or prefer graduate degrees for all high-level administrators.

Higher education is here to stay, and the day will come when a

degree is required at the entry level for most criminal justice positions. Many agencies already require a bachelor's degree.

Gordon Misner, current president of ACJS, has noted that we educators have sold the public a bill of goods on higher education, and for the most part the public has bought it. This is true in the criminal justice field as anywhere else.

Because of this, we must increasingly evaluate higher education and strive to develop quality. However, we must ask who determines quality? Generally I feel it is the consumer - the graduate of the program, the public he or she serves, and the administrators who hire the graduate in an agency. Evaluation should also be subject to internal and external review by educators themselves.

We must recognize the need for developing new models, both in our academic structure and delivery-services system. These new models must focus on increasing quality, not on giving away degrees.

The quality of an educational program is recognized. We know, for example, that a degree from Harvard or Yale is more impressive in the business world than a degree from most other colleges. I think criminal justice degrees from some schools will be more impressive than others, but I hope that, rather than developing elitist schools and colleges, we can work together to develop the quality of all those programs which deserve to survive.

Criminal justice higher education is at a crossroads. We in the academic world, many of us former practitioners, would like to see the improvements necessary to advance professionalization. Your presence here today indicates that you are interested in the crucial issues facing the criminal justice system. We, as practitioners and educators, should take the initiative in demanding quality. Our failure to do so will hurt the profession and will hurt the individual who pursues a degree that may be worthless.

The competition for educational funding is causing many colleges and universities to explore new programs and find new potential students. One of the most common innovations has been the extended-campus concept. Commissioner Nyquist sums up the problem rather well when he said:

Learning is now ubiquitous, after all, in our society. But I deplore satellite operations that are poorly planned, inadequately financed, and shoddily run. Some of these places aren't even very good at record keeping, and the teaching and counseling are no better. What we have here in some cases -- I am not saying all cases -- is a flagrant example of unscrupulous entrepreneurs (I refuse to call them "educators") enrolling unwary students in order to collect the financial benefits these students receive from State and Federal governments. The postwar colonization tendency of higher education has simply gone too far.

I don't think Nyquist means that satellite programs shouldn't exist; indeed we are pretty much involved in them at John Jay College. However, we do need to take a close look at satellite programs in

education and endeavor to maintain quality.

Another issue of concern is the quality of faculty in criminal justice. Many faculty members leave much to be desired, in academic preparation, in their teaching skills, and in their current familiarity with the literature and research in the field.

Ultimately, however, to improve administration and faculty we must take a much closer look at the quality of student we are graduating. Some of our best students should become our future faculty, and these people are a true measure of our performance as educators. We should be striving to provide a well-rounded, broadly based liberal arts education at the undergraduate level, and generally a professionally oriented education at the graduate level. There is also a need for some graduate programs to emphasize research and theory, particularly at the doctoral level, but the primary, immediate need is to prepare the practitioner to function effectively in a complex system. The need for criminal justice educators will probably decline somewhat over the next decade, although not as quickly as those in the traditional disciplines. In some measure these views are supported, although not conclusively, by research. More research is needed both on the content and results of our criminal justice programs.

In closing, I would ask you to consider carefully the need to improve the quality of criminal justice higher education, and

the ways in which improvement can be accomplished. I believe some progress has been made during the past few years but, as I said earlier, we have a long way to go. I'm sure we shall disagree as we revise our thinking and our ways of educating, but, to borrow another Nyquist quote, attributed to James Thurber, "We must not look backward in anger, nor forward in fear, but around us in awareness."

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I am indebted to Commissioner Nyquist, whose remarks in a speech "Educational Prostitution and Accreditation" before the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools helped me formulate many of the ideas presented here.

**END**