UNIT REPORT

Criminal Justice PhD
Assessment Plan Summary

Criminal Justice PhD

Conduct Scientific Research

Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's ability to conduct scientific research that adds to the current body of knowledge in criminal justice and criminology.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Doctoral Students Will Be Able To Conduct Original Criminal Justice And Criminology Research

Learning Objective Description:

Students completing the Ph.D. program will demonstrate the ability to produce original research by integrating knowledge, skills, and abilities learned throughout the program.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Successful Completion Of The Dissertation

Indicator Description:

Successful completion of an original research study as demonstrated by the defense of a Dissertation using a faculty-developed rubric. The rubric uses a 1 (insignificant) to 5 (critically significant) rating of specific criteria each dissertation should address. These criteria include: choice of problem, theoretical framework, mode of inquiry, execution of study, interpretation of results, analysis, written presentation, originality of idea and/or approach, and contribution to the field.

Criterion Description:

Students will demonstrate their ability to engage in an original research study within the field of criminal justice and criminology. At minimum, a dissertation prospectus will include a literature review of relevant empirical literature and a well defined and defensible methodology. The final dissertation will include the statistical analysis appropriate to the methodology described, and the contextualization of the study results within the existing literature. Students defending their final dissertation will receive a score of 80% or above on each of the 9 elements outlined in the dissertation rubric.

Findings Description:

Overall, the majority of the students demonstrated competency in conducting original criminal justice and criminological research. Our findings revealed that some students fell below the 80% threshold for "theoretical framework" (n = 2), "analysis" (n =1), and "contribution to the field" (n =1). Students seem to excel (as demonstrated by a score of 5/5 on the rubric) in their mode of inquiry (80%; 8/10), followed by the execution of their study (60%; 6/10), the analysis (60%, 6/10), and the originality of their ideas (60%; 6/10). Areas in need of improvement include the choice of problem, the interpretation of the results, written presentation, and the contribution to the field with 60% (6/10), 70% (7/10), 60% (6/10), and 70% (7/10) of students scoring a 4/5 or below, respectively.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Encourage Students To Submit Research For Publication And Strengthen Statistical Abilities

Action Description:

For the upcoming year, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will review the different standards across the various portfolio committees to see if a more uniformed approach is needed. In addition, portfolio committee members will encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio in an effort to increase marketability. The findings from our dissertation rubric also suggest that the Department needs to continue focusing on strengthening students' statistical abilities. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 4. encouraging and funding students to attend ICPSR statistical workshops over the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students to attend pre-conference statistical workshops.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Successful Defense Of A Research Portfolio

Indicator Description:

Doctoral students are required to submit and orally defend a portfolio of selected written research products that were developed during their tenure in the doctoral program to a panel of faculty members. The current policy states that the portfolio must contain at least two research articles that are deemed by the committee members as acceptable for submission for publication to a peer reviewed journal.

Criterion Description:

While the current policy states that the minimum requirement for a portfolio defense is two publishable articles, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee would like to start seeing Ph.D. students who are defending their portfolio have at least one paper either published or under review at a peer-reviewed journal at the time of the defense.

Findings Description:

A review of the CVs of Ph.D. students who defended their portfolio in AY15-16 revealed that 100% (15/15) of them had at least 1 paper published or under review in a peer reviewed journal at the time of their defense. 66.67% (10/15) had at least 1 peer reviewed publication while 93.3% (14/15) had at least 1 paper under review. On average, students had 1.7 articles under review (range from 0-3) and 1.4 articles published in a peer-reviewed journal (range from 0-6) at the time of their portfolio defense.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Encourage Students To Submit Research For Publication And Strengthen Statistical Abilities

Action Description:

For the upcoming year, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will review the different standards across the various portfolio committees to see if a more uniformed approach is needed. In addition, portfolio committee members will encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio in an effort to increase marketability. The findings from our dissertation rubric also suggest that the Department needs to continue focusing on strengthening students' statistical abilities. This will be accomplished by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 4. encouraging and funding students to attend ICPSR statistical workshops over the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students to attend pre-conference statistical workshops.

Doctoral Teaching Fellows Provide Quality Classroom Teaching

Goal Description:

Enhance and develop student's ability to demonstrate high levels of teaching effectiveness.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Provide Effective Undergraduate Classroom Instruction

Learning Objective Description:

Advanced doctoral students will develop and demonstrate their aptitude for providing high quality classroom instruction for undergraduate students.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Faculty Observations

Indicator Description:

Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching face-to-face will be observed in the classroom by a faculty member using a faculty-developed rubric. Elements being evaluated include Preparation for Lecture, such as organization, content, subject knowledge, and use of Powerpoint as well as Delivery of Lecture, such as professionalism, eye contact, enthusiasm, vocal properties, classroom management, body language, and length of presentation.

Criterion Description:

Faculty observations of a DTF led lecture will be conducted using the faculty developed rubric. Students will obtain an average score of 80% or above on the overall rubric and on each of the elements.

Findings Description:

Of the 17 faculty observations conducted in AY2015-106, 16 scored an overall 80% or above on the faculty teaching observation rubric. The average score was a 90.11% with a range of 78.5% to 97.5%. A review of the average of each of the elements reveals that students excelled at professionalism in the classroom (94%), making eye contact (94%), enthusiasm (93%), classroom management (92%), and body language (93%). Areas in need of improvement include vocal properties (85%) and length of presentation (86%).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Teaching Effectiveness

Action Description:

We will continue to focus on improving Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching effectiveness. Prior to being assigned an undergraduate class to teach, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series. The Department will also provide a faculty-led discussion on setting and meeting objectives in the classroom as well as discuss and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management in CRIJ 7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

IDEA Evaluation Forms

Indicator Description:

Student ratings of Doctoral Teaching Fellows using the Individual Developmental Education Assessment (IDEA) Evaluation forms.

Criterion Description:

Doctoral Teaching Fellows will perform at or above the similar/middle 40% box on the IDEA evaluation form. Summary Evaluation will be 4.0 or above for teaching evaluations on the following criteria 1. progress on objectives, 2. excellent teacher, and 3. excellent course.

Findings Description:

15 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellows in the Fall 2015, with 100% (15/15) of them scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluation with an average of 4.5. Furthermore, the average score for progress on relevant objectives was 4.43, for excellent teacher was 4.58, and for excellent course was 4.45.

22 courses were taught by Doctoral Teaching Fellow in the Spring 2016, with 82% (18/22) of them scoring a 4.0 or above on the IDEA summary evaluation. More specifically, 86%, 82%, and 64% of doctoral teaching fellows scored a 4.0 or above on the elements of progress on objectives, excellent teacher, and excellent course, respectively. Furthermore, the average score for progress on relevant objectives was 4.32, for excellent teacher was 4.39, and for excellent course was 4.13.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Teaching Effectiveness

Action Description:

We will continue to focus on improving Doctoral Teaching Fellows teaching effectiveness. Prior to being assigned an undergraduate class to teach, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series. The Department will also provide a faculty-led discussion on setting and meeting objectives in the classroom as well as discuss and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management in CRIJ 7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching).

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

For the 2015-2016 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening doctoral student research and teaching skills with an overall goal of placing our graduates in academic positions.

In addition to discussing the utilization of the portfolio process as evidence of doctoral student writing ability and research competency, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will review the different standards across the various portfolio committees to see if a more uniformed approach is needed. In addition, portfolio committee members will encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio in an effort to increase marketability.

The Department will focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities.

Students will be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events. The Department will start tracking Ph.D. student peer-reviewed publications.

The development of our PhD students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research fellowships.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee will continue to provide formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows. This year, the committee will also include informal "pop-in" observations throughout the semester to provide additional feedback for improvement.

Furthermore, to promote excellence in teaching, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. The instructor of CRIJ7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching) will also discuss setting and meeting objectives in the classroom and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management techniques.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

This past year, the Ph.D. program underwent a program review. During that time, the Committee gathered information to assess the various standards across different portfolio committees. Based on the results, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee is now discussing updating the portfolio policy to create similar standards across committees as well as a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the comprehensive exam model.

There has been an increase in students submitting their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio. This will continue to be encouraged with a focus on top-tier publications.

The Department offered several opportunities to strengthening students statistical abilities including 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, and 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities (e.g., meta-analysis brown bag, workshops on how to write a portfolio and how to write a dissertation, workshop on applying for grants, etc.).

26 Ph.D. students presented their research at national conferences. The Department will develop a better way to track Ph.D. student peer-reviewed publications at various stages throughout the program.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee provided formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows each semester. Furthermore, incoming DTFs were required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course.

Plan for continuous improvement

Closing Summary:

For the 2016-2017 academic year, continued emphasis will be placed on strengthening doctoral student research and teaching skills with an overall goal of placing our graduates in academic positions.

Based on the results from the external review that occurred in 2015-2016, the Graduate Standards and Admissions Committee will discuss the advantages and disadvantages related to our current portfolio policy vis a vis a comprehensive exam model.

Faculty are asked to encourage students to submit their research articles for publication prior to the defense of the portfolio with an increased focused on top-tier publications.

The Department will continue to focus on strengthening students statistical abilities by 1. providing a faculty led 1/2 day workshop on statistics the summer prior to starting the Ph.D. program, 2. offering various statistics related elective courses for 2nd and 3rd year Ph.D. students who are beginning to work on their portfolio and dissertation, 3. providing additional statistical and methodological workshops throughout the semester to further develop specific skills and abilities, 4. encouraging and funding students at attend ICPSR's statistical workshop in the summer, as well as 5. encouraging and funding students at attend pre-conference statistical workshops.

Students will be encouraged to publish their research findings in peer-reviewed journal articles as well as present their research at national conferences and University-sponsored events. The Department will seek ways to better track Ph.D. student peer-reviewed publications throughout various stages in the program.

The development of our PhD students statistical and research skills is contingent on 1. access to the latest versions of various statistical software programs used in the social sciences (e.g., STATA, MPlus, HLM, etc.), 2. student travel and professional development funds, and 3. summer research fellowships.

The Graduate Student Development and Assessment Committee will continue to provide formal faculty observations of Doctoral Teaching Fellows. The committee has developed a "short-version" of the observation form for students with previous teaching experience. Furthermore, to promote excellence in teaching, incoming DTFs will be required to 1. provide a guest lecture with a faculty observer, 2. attend SHSU's annual teaching conference, and 3. complete the Teaching Online with Blackboard Certification Series course. Students will also be encouraged to complete PACE's Teaching Assistant Certification Series. The instructor of CRIJ7333 (a pre-requisite to teaching) will also discuss setting and meeting objectives in the classroom and practice (with mock classroom scenarios) proper delivery of lectures and classroom management techniques.