

Academic Programs and Planning (APP) Committee
Recommendation to Faculty Senate

Degree Designation Change: BA to BS in Criminal Justice

The APP committee reviewed the proposal on September 21 and October 19. Feedback from our first reading, and CRIM's response to that feedback, can be found in the accompanying material. The committee is unanimous in recommending the proposal to faculty senate with reservations, which are outlined below.

Criminal Justice will be the first degree program in the State of New Jersey to take advantage of a new state policy from the Academic Issues Committee (AIC) which states:

An institution seeking a change in degree designation (e.g., B.A. to B.S.) must submit the Changing a Degree Designation form provided by the AIC containing the following information and materials to the AIC: a letter indicating why the modification of degree designation is desired and why it will not fundamentally change the purpose of the program; a record of any significant changes in the current degree designation during the previous five years; and the proposed changes in the courses required for the degree.

The AIC will then evaluate the material provided and assess whether the following two conditions exist:

- *There is a fundamental change in the purpose of the program (e.g., a B.A. in Music that has a liberal arts orientation cannot be changed to a B.S. in Music with an applied music orientation. However, a B.A. in Graphic Design might be changed to a B.S. in Graphic Design because the field required the addition of technical courses.)*
- *More than 25 percent of the courses required in the major with the new degree designation will differ from those in the major with the old degree designation. General education and free elective courses are excluded from consideration. Fractions of courses are rounded up. Requests for changes in degree designations for doctoral programs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

As the first proposal that will be going through this process, it is impossible to be confident in how this process will play out. Therefore, the proposal needs to err on the side of including details that do not seem necessary to those closely connected to the degree but may be crucial in gaining the support of the members of AIC. The fact that this will be a test case of the new policy also means that it is likely to be particularly important that the proposal be very explicit on how this change will not fundamentally change the purpose of the degree. APP acknowledges that the proposal makes a case for this but are concerned that any member of AIC looking to use this proposal to test the limits of new guidelines will argue that the case is not fully spelled out.

Members of APP found many of the responses to our initial concerns to lack sufficient depth to fully alleviate those concerns, and may raise additional questions at later levels of review. For example:

- the argument for BS appears to be largely that the program would like students to take some new courses specifically related to the major. It appears to reviewers that those new courses could be met by reducing the number of unrestricted cognates within the current degree. The arguments showing how this is not the case need to be more robust.
- Enrollment trends should be supported with data, not by simply speculating that the issues/changes in the Criminal Justice system are impacting enrollment. Additionally, the argument that creating a more progressive curriculum will attract students needs supporting.
- The rationale for getting rid of the BA needs more supporting evidence and a specific teach out plan ought to be included.
- The comparison with the four other programs in the state should be more specific.

There is also no precedent that makes it possible to predict how specifically the 25% rule will be interpreted. The 16-credit differential between a BA and BS is 25% of the BA, moving additional courses from recommended to required may, or may not, be interpreted by AIC as meaning the degree differs by more than the allowed amount. Comparing the differences in a table showing the 25% of the change in a visual format such as a table would provide clarity. Appendix A does some of this work but suffers from the fact that BA accounts for only 14 classes, with 55 credits. This obscures similarities and differences between the current BA and proposed BS.

As a note on procedure, if AIC rejects the proposal, there will be no opportunity to revise and resubmit, as is standard for new degree programs. If the proposal is rejected, CRIM will need to go through the process of a full degree proposal.

Finally, members of APP remain concerned that moving from a BA to a BS will move Stockton further and further from its liberal arts tradition and focus.